DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 227 142 TM 830 145

TITLE	Florida Statewide Assessment Resource Manual.
INSTITUTION	Florida State Dept. of Education, Tallahassee. Student Assessment Section.
PUB DATE	79
NOTE	74p.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Accountability; *Basic Skills; Criterion Referenced Tests; *Educational Assessment; *Educational Legislation; Elementary Secondary Education; Mathematics Skills; Minimum Competency Testing; Reading Skills; *School Counselors; *State Programs; Test Construction; *Test Use; Writing Skills
IDENTIFIERS	*Florida Statewide Assessment Program

ABSTRACT

The Florida Statewide Assessment Program, a result of the Educational Accountability Act of 1971, collects and reports information annually concerning student achievement in the basic skills areas of reading, writing, and mathematics. This publication was prepared for counselors and other school personnel as a resource manual with the following objectives: (1) to present a historical overview of the assessment program and how it relates to the state's accountability program; (2) to briefly explain general principles and procedures in test development, administration, and scoring; and (3) to provide suggestions or activities for counselors and other school personnel in the interpretation and utilization of test data. Legislation related to the program; state board of education administrative rules; skills tested on the State Student Assessment Test, Part II; and Guidelines for Using State Assessment Tests to improve curricular programs are included in the appendices. (Author/PN)

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FLORIDA STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT RESOURCE MANUAL

1979

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CHAPTER I

AN OVERVIEW OF FLORIDA'S STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

Introduction

There is a strong movement throughout the nation and in the State of Florida for educational improvement. Federal and state governments are concerned about public opinion polls and studies that show a decline in student achievement. Florida has taken decisive steps to counteract the achievement decline through establishment of a system of educational accountability. Educational goals have been defined, minimum student performance standards have been established, student achievement is being measured, and programs are being evaluated. It is Florida's goal to insure that every child acquires essential skills through a quality educational program that is both efficient and economical.

The Statewide Assessment Program was created in the early seventies to help examine the State's educational program. Its purpose was to provide information on student achievement of basic skills. Since 1971, data generated by the State Assessment tests has assisted decision-makers in determining broad areas of educational need.

Local district educators also have used State Assessment results to assist students in their individual programs. Guidance counselors, who are in direct contact with students and teachers, are very important in this process. They are in a position to work closely with students, parents, and teachers concerning test scores and to support the instructional program in an effort to provide minimal skills to all students.

This publication was prepared for counselors and other school personnel as a resource manual with the following objectives:

1. To present a historical overview of the assessment program and how it relates to the State's accountability program.
2. To briefly explain general principles and procedures in test development, administration, and scoring.
3. To provide suggestions or activities for counselors and other school personnel in the interpretation and utilization of test data.

Purposes of the Statewide Assessment Program

One purpose of the Statewide Assessment Program is to collect and report information annually about student achievement of selected basic and practical

skills. The assessment program evolved as a result of the Educational Accountability Act of 1971 which emphasized the assessment of elementary school children in the basic skills areas of reading, writing and mathematics. Five years later, the 1976 Legislature expanded the law to include yearly assessments of students in grades 3, 5, 8, and 11 in minimum communication and mathematics skills. The 1976 Legislature further mandated the assessment of eleventh grade students' ability to apply the basic skills to practical problems by a paper and pencil test. Under the law, this test, known as the State Student Assessment Test, Part II, was to be passed before a student could receive a high school diploma.[1]

Information on the results of these assessments is important to citizens, parents, educators and legislators. Based on this information, decisions can be made about educational policies and practices, such as how to finance educational programs, build adequate facilities, and develop adequate and appropriate instructional programs. Information on student achievement is necessary if these and other important decisions are to be made wisely, and the Statewide Assessment Program provides this necessary achievement information.

Further, the information from the assessment program is designed to make a contribution, if utilized effectively, to the academic success of students. The tests measure various skills which students should achieve. The counselor or teacher can use these results with each student in examining and charting individual instructional programs and career plans.

The following section will review the historical development of the Statewide Assessment Program , the related legislation, and explain some of the complexities of the test implementation process.

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[1]This requirement has been delayed until 1982-83 by order of the court as a result of the Debra P. vs. Turlington challenge to the graduation test.

CHAPTER II

THE STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

The Educational Accountability Act of 1971

The Statewide Assessment Program began as a testing unit under the Educational Accountability Act of 1971. The Florida Legislature authorized the Commissioner of Education to develop a plan for evaluating the effectiveness of educational programs. The Commissioner's task was to develop evaluation procedures "designed to assess objectively the educational programs offered by the public schools... and (develop) such methods as are necessary to assess the progress of students at various grade levels." Under the Commissioner's plan, the program for educational accountability included the following:

1. The establishment of major statewide educational objectives for each grade level and subject area.
2. A statewide system of assessment based on both criterion-referenced and norm-referenced tests.
3. Development by the Department of Education (DOE) of an annual public report of the assessment results for each district and the State "with an analysis and recommendation concerning the costs and differential effectiveness of instructional programs."
4. Development by each district's school board of an annual public report for each school in the district.
5. Development of accreditation standards by 1973-74 based upon the attainment of the established educational objectives.

These objectives resulted in the initiation of the Florida Statewide Assessment Program which in only a few years has had a major impact on education in the State.

The first major impact felt throughout the State was utilization at the district level of educational objectives adopted by the State Board of Education. All districts became responsible for student achievement of these specific state-mandated "milestone" objectives.

Secondly, Florida became one of the first states to use criterion-referenced tests as a statewide performance indicator of students' achievement status. These tests formed the basis for what was to become Florida's effort in competency-based education; these efforts helped generate momentum across Florida's schools for adoption of criterion-referenced tests which would measure local instructional objectives.

A third significant impact on Florida's educational system was the concept of testing minimal basic skills. These are skills in reading, writing, and arithmetic which each child should acquire before promotion through the educational system. This movement encouraged schools to be more skills oriented and less accepting of the notion of social promotion of students.

The 1974 and 1975 Legislation

In 1974, the Accountability Act of 1971 was amended as follows:

1. No other subject area was to be tested until the assessment of reading, writing, and mathematics had been implemented in grades 3 through 6.
2. All students in grades 3 and 6 would be assessed in the subject areas of reading, writing and mathematics and all students in grades 3 through 6 would be tested by 1976. (The previous legislation had not been specific about grades to be tested.)
3. Statewide results were to be compared to national indicators of student performance.

One other major change occurred in the Accountability Act because of legislation enacted in 1975. Both the original Accountability Act of 1971 and the 1974 revised Act directed the Commissioner of Education to develop accreditation standards based upon the attainment of established educational objectives. However, the 1976 Florida State Legislature discontinued the state accreditation program.

The 1976 Accountability Act

By 1976, the Florida Legislature had become increasingly concerned about the levels of achievement in the public schools. This concern led directly to the creation of the 1976 Accountability Act which became one of the most comprehensive educational laws in the nation.

While the 1971 Act was concerned primarily with a system of assessing students, the 1976 version both consolidated and expanded existing statutes on all aspects of accountability. Sections of the 1976 law related to a state management information system, evaluation procedures, the student testing program, basic skills development, pupil progression from one grade to another, district planning, and cost accounting. The entire statute will not be reviewed herein, but those features relating to the assessment tests will be discussed in the following sections.

The Assessment Program and Minimum Performance Standards

Based on the evaluation of the impact of the existing legislation, important changes were initiated by the 1976 Legislature. The Educational Evaluation

Section 229.565, Florida Statutes, of the 1976 law (see Appendix A) provided for State Board of Education approval of Minimum Performance Standards. The standards (or objectives) were to be adopted for a three to five year period and were to form the basis for the assessment tests. All students were expected to master the minimal standards as part of their instructional programs.

The Student Assessment Testing Program Section 229.57, Florida Statutes, discusses the assessment program specifically (see Appendix A). This part of the law designates that the Statewide Assessment Program should provide data for purposes of decision making, based upon need identification and comparison of schools and districts. Specifically, the assessment program was to provide test administration, scoring, and reporting of test results for both regular and exceptional students for purposes of evaluating instructional programs.

The changes in the assessment portion of the law (Section 229.57, Florida Statutes) were based on long-range plans developed by the Student Assessment Section. It was proposed that assessment involve students in grades three, five, eight, and eleven. These grade levels were selected for the following reasons:

1. Assessment at grades three and five provides a measure of within-school growth for approximately 95 percent of Florida's elementary schools.
2. Grade eight was previously included in a separate statewide testing program coordinated by Florida State University and inclusion of grade eight would increase the longitudinal evaluation possibilities.
3. Grade eleven provides a terminal assessment point, yet occurs early enough to provide test results which can be used for student remediation.

Pupil Progression Plans

The Pupil Progression Section 232.245, Florida Statutes, is very closely related to the assessment section of the legislation because it requires districts to establish a comprehensive promotion program based on local educational goals and state minimum standards. Each district was to create and adopt a comprehensive program for pupil progression based upon an evaluation of each pupil's performance, including how well the student masters the Minimum Performance Standards approved by the State Board of Education. Further, the plan was to be based upon local goals and objectives which were compatible with the State's plan and also supplemented the Minimum Performance Standards. Emphasis was to be placed upon the pupil's mastery of the basic skills, especially reading, before promotion from the third, fifth, eighth, and eleventh grades. In addition, each district was to develop graduation requirements that included satisfactory performance on a test of functional literacy. The law states that students must demonstrate the "...ability to successfully apply basic skills

to everyday life situations...." Hence, beginning with the 1978-79 school year, all Florida public school students were to pass a state-administered test (the State Student Assessment Test, Part II) to receive a high school diploma.[2]

The Department of Education has the responsibility of certifying when a student has passed the SSAT-II. If a student does not successfully pass the test after attempts in the junior and senior years, a Certificate of Completion (initially referred to as a Certificate of Attendance and later changed to Certificate of Completion) is to be awarded in lieu of a regular high school diploma. Students who receive a Certificate of Completion may continue to work toward a regular high school diploma through their adult high school program.

The 1978 Legislation

The 1978 Legislation added a section to the 1976 Accountability Act that clarified the general requirements for high school graduation (see Appendix A for Section 232.246, Florida Statutes). This section stated that students will demonstrate mastery of the eleventh grade Minimum Performance Standards as well as pass a test which requires application of basic skills to practical situations and meet all local graduation requirements. The Minimum Performance Standards are measured by the State Student Assessment Test, Part I (SSAT-I) and the practical situations by the State Student Assessment Test, Part II (SSAT-II). Further, the 1978 Legislation states that if a student does not meet these general requirements, he or she will receive a Certificate of Completion (superseding the Certificate of Attendance referred to previously) rather than a high school diploma.

Section 232.246, Florida Statutes, made provision for modification of test instruments and procedures for exceptional students who chose to take the regular tests rather than a special test as provided by Section 232.247, Florida Statutes (see Appendix A and discussion on page 29). Sections 232.247 and 232.248, Florida Statutes, were also added by the 1978 Legislature. These further address special standards for exceptional student assessment and confidentiality of test instruments, respectively.

Section 232.247, Florida Statutes, the exceptional student legislation, provides an opportunity for five groups of exceptional students (Educable Mentally Retarded, Trainable Mentally Retarded, Deaf, Specific Learning Disabled, Emotionally Handicapped) to be awarded a special diploma upon meeting standards developed for their exceptionalities (see page 29 of this manual). Thus, two types of diplomas are available for graduating exceptional students:

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[2] This requirement has been delayed until 1982-83 by order of the court as a result of the Debra P. vs. Turlington challenge to the graduation test.

1. The Standard Diploma, which indicates the student has mastered the eleventh grade Minimum Performance Standards (State Student Assessment Test, Part I) as well as all district requirements; or

2. The Special Diploma, which indicates the exceptional student has met the local district requirements of his or her exceptional education program and has been certified as having mastered all relevant State Minimum Student Performance Standards.

There were several important State Board of Education rules which resulted from the 1978 addition of Sections 232.246, 232.247, and 232.248, Florida Statutes. Important to the Assessment Section particularly was SBE Rule 6A-1.942, FAC which establishes scoring rules for the assessment tests including tables specifying the criteria for mastery of both the SSAT-I and the SSAT-II. SBE Rule 6A-1.943 FAC affected the assessment of the exceptional students as stipulated in Section 232.247, Florida Statutes, by specifying permissible modifications and/or administration procedures of the regular test which are available to specified exceptional students. (See Appendix B for a copy of these rules.)

Test security was addressed in Section 232.248, Florida Statutes, as an addition to the accountability law. SBE Rule 6A-1.944, FAC was created to address these issues. It designates (1) those persons who should have access to test material and (2) storage and destruction procedures for the test booklets and other materials. (See Appendix B for a copy of this rule.)

Minimum Student Performance Standards

The development of statewide Minimum Student Performance Standards was a requirement of the Educational Accountability Act of 1976 (Sections 229.565 and 229.57, Florida Statutes). The performance standards that were ultimately adopted were based upon the state objectives established as a result of the 1971 legislation and revised in 1974. The broad content areas in both the newly adopted Minimum Performance Standards and the previous objectives were similar so districts did not have to make drastic changes in curriculum for the transition from objectives to standards.

The actual process of developing the Minimum Performance Standards was lengthy and involved educational personnel on both State and local levels. Curriculum specialists in the Department of Education organized statewide task forces composed of classroom teachers, district curriculum specialists, and lay persons to assist with the development of a first draft of the minimum standards. This draft was based upon the minimum objectives adopted by the State Board of Education for the 1976-77 school year, resource materials developed through the Department of Education/University of Florida Basic Skills Project, and objectives developed by local school districts.

The developmental process used in establishing each standard, and the skill(s) related to the standard, required determination of which skills were necessary at each grade level for normal progress towards the desired higher or highest level of that particular skill. The highest skill level required (usually at grades 8 or 11) specified the maximum difficulty. A further criteria for including a standard and skill was that it would be reasonable for every student in basic education programs, who had had appropriate instruction and who was not impaired by a mental or physical handicap, to master the skill and standard.

All Florida school districts were invited to formulate review committees. Nine of the larger districts, seven of the medium-sized districts, and thirty of the smaller districts participated in this review of the standards and skills. In addition, three statewide committees (one committee of lay persons, one of classroom teachers, and one of principals and district directors of instruction) reviewed the proposed standards. The committees were asked to identify standards or skills which (1) were not considered basic, (2) were inappropriate for the proposed grade level, or (3) were not written clearly. The committees were also asked to identify additional skills or standards that were needed. Based on the results of these reviews, four standards were revised and clarified, three standards were deleted, nine skills were moved to another standard, twenty-four skills were moved to another grade level, forty-nine skills were revised and clarified, twelve skills were deleted and ten new skills were added.

These revised minimum standards were approved by a Department of Education Accountability Task Force on February 17, 1977. After acceptance and approval by the Director of the Division of Public Schools and the Commissioner of Education, the standards were presented to the State Board of Education and approved for the 1977-78, 1978-79 and 1979-80 school years. These standards were extended by the State Board of Education in May 1979 to continue through the 1980-81 school year. In addition, a new set of standards has been approved which includes the majority of the first set and will be tested for the first time October 1981. The standards and skills may be found in several Department of Education publications listed below:

1. A Guide to the 1978-79 State Assessment Results
2. State and District Report of Results, 1978-79
3. Minimum Student Performance Standards for Florida Schools, 1977-78, 1978-79, 1979-80
4. State Student Assessment Test, Part II; Answers to Your Questions (Includes SSAT-II skills only.)
5. SSAT-II for Adult Education Students, 1979, a poster/brochure. (Includes SSAT-II skills only.)

The statewide Minimum Performance Standards that were adopted are shown in Figures 1 and 2 and represent basic skills in reading, writing, and mathematics. Mastery of each standard is expected at the beginning of each designated grade level. Students must master the standards by

FIGURE 1

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
MINIMUM STUDENT PERFORMANCE STANDARDS,
COMMUNICATION SKILLS,
AND THE GRADE LEVELS AT WHICH
THEY ARE TO BE TESTED

READING STANDARDS	GRADES 3	5	8	11
A - The student will acquire a basic vocabulary as determined by a specified word list.	X	X	X	X
B - The student will determine word meaning from the way the word is used in a passage.		X	X	X
C - The student will determine word meaning from a knowledge of word parts as used in a given context.	X	X	X	X
D - The student will determine whether different selections have similar meanings.		X		
E - The student will determine the main idea of a message.		X	X	X
F - The student will find information in a message.	X	X	X	X
G - The student will determine the causes and effects of events and actions.	X	X	X	X
H - The student will determine the logical generalizations which can be drawn from a message.	X	X	X	X
I - The student will recognize fantasy, fact, and opinion in a message.	X	X	X	X
J - The student will recognize irrelevant and invalid statements.	X	X	X	X
K - The student will follow oral and written directions.	X	X	X	X
L - The student will identify appropriate sources for needed information.		X	X	X
M - The student will use appropriate reference skills.	X	X	X	X

WRITING STANDARDS	GRADES 3	5	8	11
A - The student will compose grammatically correct sentences.	X	X	X	X
B - The student will organize objects and information into logical groupings and orders.	X	X	X	X
C - The student will write a paragraph expressing ideas clearly.	X	X	X	X
D - The student will write for the purpose of supplying necessary information.	X	X	X	X
E - The student will write letters and messages using commonly accepted formats.	X	X	X	X
F - The student will fill out common forms.	X	X	X	X
G - The student will spell correctly.	X	X	X	X
H - The student will punctuate correctly.	X	X	X	X
I - The student will capitalize correctly.	X	X	X	X
J - The student will write legibly.	X	X	X	

FIGURE 2

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
MINIMUM STUDENT PERFORMANCE STANDARDS,
MATHEMATICS,
AND THE GRADE LEVELS AT WHICH
THEY ARE TO BE TESTED

MATHEMATICS STANDARDS	GRADES 3	5	8	11
A - The student will count quantities.	X	X		
B - The student will read and write numerals.	X	X	X	
C - The student will round numbers.		X	X	X
D - The student will put numbers in order.	X	X	X	X
E - The student will determine equivalent forms of fractions, decimals and percents.	X	X	X	X
F - The student will add whole numbers.	X	X	X	
G - The student will subtract whole numbers.	X	X	X	
H - The student will multiply whole numbers.		X	X	X
I - The student will divide whole numbers.	X	X	X	X
J - The student will add and subtract fractions.		X	X	X
K - The student will multiply fractions.			X	X
L - The student will add and subtract decimals.			X	
M - The student will multiply and divide decimals.			X	X
N - The student will find percentages.				X
O - The student will measure time, temperature, distance, capacity and weight.	X	X	X	X
P - The student will identify geometric figures and shapes.	X		X	
Q - The student will identify the value of coins and bills.	X	X	X	X
R - The student will determine information needed to solve a problem.			X	X
S - The student will estimate solutions by rounding.			X	X
T - The student will solve real-world problems involving whole numbers.	X	X	X	X
U - The student will solve real-world problems involving fractions, decimals, and percents.		X	X	X
V - The student will solve money problems.	X	X	X	X
W - The student will solve measurement problems using metric and customary units.			X	X
X - The student will interpret graphs, tables, and maps.		X	X	X

correctly answering a certain number of items; mastery of the skills related to the standards is important for diagnosis and instructional purposes.

Criteria for Mastery of the Standards and Skills Measured by Statewide Assessment

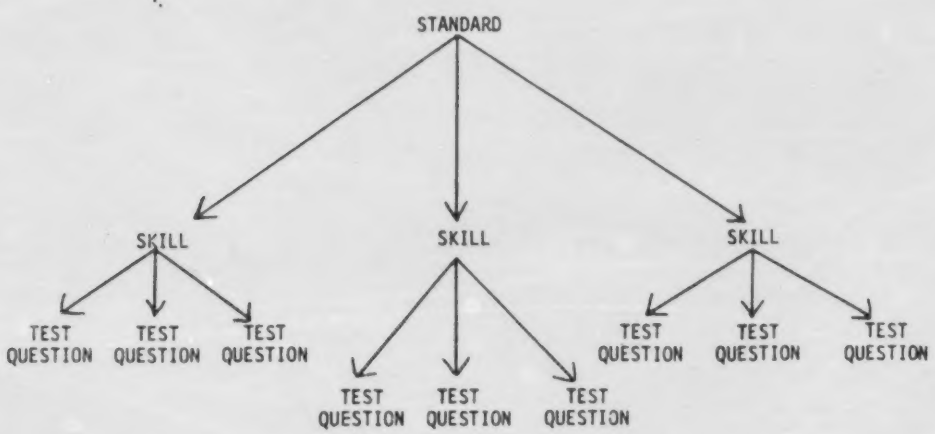
Since all Florida students are expected to master the Minimum Student Performance Standards, the Statewide Assessment tests are designed to provide an indication of students' mastery of the standards. A test designed to accomplish this is a criterion-referenced test in which a small set of test questions is selected to be representative of the instructional objective being measured. Criterion levels are then established such that if the desired level is obtained, the student will be considered to have "mastered" the objective or standard.

In the Florida case, two levels of objectives are being measured: skills and standards. The scoring methodology is designed to reveal mastery of both skills and standards.

Two or more skills generally relate to each Minimum Performance Standard. Each skill, in turn, is measured by several questions or items, usually four or five. The test questions are constructed to reveal whether or not students have "mastered" the minimum standards and skills. Figure 3 shows the relationship of skills to a standard and items or questions to a skill.

FIGURE 3

RELATIONSHIP OF STANDARDS, SKILLS, AND QUESTIONS



Setting the Criteria

The primary concern in establishing a criterion for mastery is determining the minimal number of correct answers necessary to classify correctly a student as being a master or a non-master of a skill. Factors to be considered include:

1) the probability that students could guess enough answers to achieve the skill;

2) the probability that a student has the skill but makes an occasional careless error;

3) the philosophy that a student who has mastered a skill should be able to do it repeatedly;

4) the possibility that a student may have the skill but be so unfamiliar with a particular form of a test item that it is answered incorrectly; and

5) practical consideration of length of the test and time required to complete it.

Because all achievement tests are subject to certain measurement errors, a probability exists that a student may be misclassified. It is possible, with a great deal of assurance, to identify as a non-master the poorer performing students who attain few or none of the questions measuring a skill. The greatest problem in classifying students on a particular skill occurs with the borderline master--the student who scores close to the criterion or cut-off score that determines master or non-master status.

Criteria for Mastery of a Skill

To eliminate the problem of misclassifying an actual non-master as a master, some educators believe that a master of an objective is one who can demonstrate the skill repeatedly. These educators would demand criteria of achievement of 100%; that is, a master should be able to exhibit the skill correctly every time. Others point out that such perfection is rarely realized. In trying to combine these two aspects of determining mastery and non-mastery, the following criteria are used to determine and report mastery of a skill for the State Student Assessment Test, Parts I and II:

When the Number Of Questions To Measure A Skill Is As Follows:	The Minimum Number Of Questions Required To Be Answered Correctly Shall Be As Follows:
2	1 of 2
3	2 of 3
4	3 of 4
5	4 of 5
6	5 of 6
7	5 of 7
8	6 of 8
9	7 of 9
10	7 of 10
11	8 of 11
12	9 of 12
13	10 of 13
14	10 of 14
15	11 of 15
16	12 of 16

These procedures for governing mastery of skills are applied uniformly regardless of the number of choices presented the student through the multiple choice items. Theoretically, items with fewer choices result in a higher probability of guessing the correct answers. However, since a vast majority of the items contain four choices, this factor was disregarded.

The net effect of these procedures for scoring the tests for individual skills is to strike a reasonable balance between accuracy of classification, possibility of guessing, and practical test length. To achieve mastery status the student is required to demonstrate proficiency repeatedly but not 100% achievement. However, since not all possible questions in a skill area can be asked (e.g., not all multiplication problems), it is not possible to be perfectly certain that a "master" can indeed correctly solve every problem he/she may face in school or real life even when repeated proficiency is demonstrated.

Criteria for Mastery of a Standard

The criteria for mastery of each standard of the State Student Assessment Test, Part I is as follows:

When the Number Of Questions To Measure A Standard Is:	The Minimum Number Of Questions Required To Be Answered Correctly Shall Be:
2	1
3	2
4	3
5	4
6	5
7	5
8	6
9	7
10	7
11	8
12	9
13	10
14	10
15	11
16	12
17	12
18	13
19	14
20	14
21	15
22	16
23	17
24	17
25	18

It should be noted that although the above listing includes categories for two and three questions to measure a standard, this situation does not exist at present because there are no standards with fewer than four questions.

To pass the State Student Assessment Test, Part II, a student must successfully complete both the communication skills standard and the mathematics standard by correctly answering, on any one administration of the test, the following number of required items per standard:

When the Number Of Questions To Measure A Standard Is:	The Minimum Number Of Questions Required To Be Answered Correctly Shall Be:
55	39
56	40
57	40
58	41
59	42
60	42
61	43
62	44
63	45
64	45
65	46
66	47
67	47
68	48
69	49
70	49
71	50
72	51
73	52
74	52
75	53

To summarize, the Statewide Assessment Tests are criterion-referenced and are designed to reveal whether students have mastered the required State Minimum Performance Standards. To accomplish this, the State Board of Education established scoring rules which specify the criterion of success or mastery. These are described more fully in SBE Rule 6A-1.942 FAC (see Appendix B for copy of rule).

Test Administration

District Personnel Responsibilities

The Statewide Assessment Program must rely upon many outside resources to administer such a large-scale testing program. Both district- and school-level personnel are a part of the chain of human resources necessary for success of the program.

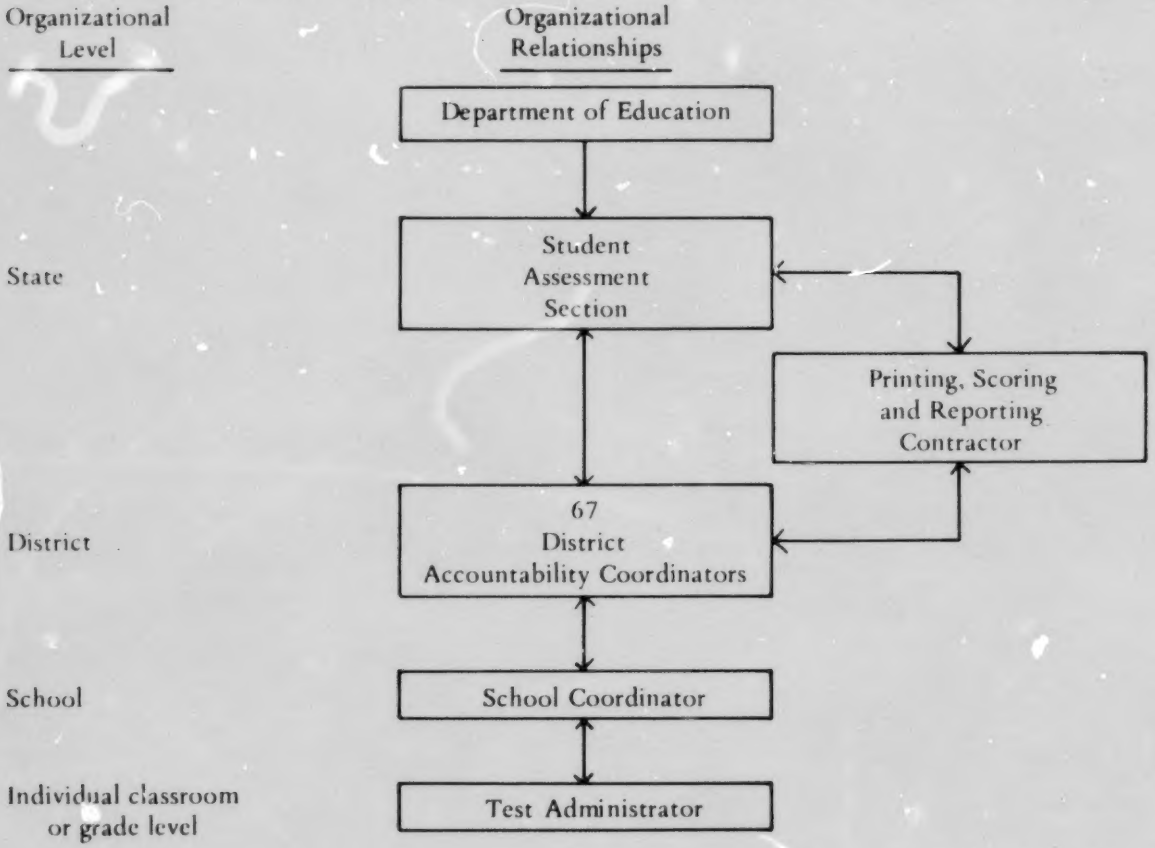
A pivotal person in the administration of the Statewide Assessment Tests is the District Coordinator of Accountability. This person functions as the liaison between the district and the Department of Education.

The District Coordinators are responsible within their district for the logistics of the testing program--materials control, training of test administrators, supervision of test administration, and distribution of test results to the schools.

Responsibilities for test administration are explained in a series of manuals for the District Coordinator, the School Coordinator, and the Test Administrator. Additionally, the Student Assessment Section provides training workshops for District Coordinators each August prior to test administration. In turn, each school within a district has a School Test Coordinator (often a counselor) who works with the District Accountability Coordinator and with teachers and counselors in administering and using the results of the Student Assessment. Figure 4 shows the general relationship between these persons and the Department of Education.

FIGURE 4

THE ORGANIZATIONAL NETWORK OF THE FLORIDA STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT PROGRAM



Who is Tested?

Since the tests are designed to measure priority skills which all Florida students are expected to acquire, virtually all students enrolled in the 3rd, 5th, 8th and 11th grades since 1977 have been tested. Certain exceptional education students and students having conditions which would impair test-taking performance are exempted from taking the assessment tests.

These exemptions are explained in detail in the Test Administrator's Manual. Neither cultural deprivation nor inability to read, per se, are criteria for exemption of the testing program.

Field-Testing Experimental Items

Each year, a sample of schools are asked to participate in the State's efforts to develop new test forms by field-testing experimental items. Students in these schools take selected experimental items after they have finished taking the regular test. The experimental items are analyzed for use on subsequent tests. The results of these field tests are not reported back to the student or the school and do not enter into the pupil progression plan in any way.

Timing of the Tests

The Statewide Assessment tests are designed to be completely untimed. This is a radical departure from the procedures used with most commercial norm-referenced tests, but it is consistent with the purpose of the program. Counselors should be alert to this point when the tests are administered in each school.

The basic skills State Student Assessment Test, Part I is usually conducted in two days with Communication Skills given one day and Mathematics on the following day with an exception at 11th grade. The eleventh graders take the Part I test one day and the Part II test the next day.

Assessment's Test Support Contractor

In addition to the district and state personnel, the Assessment Program depends upon assistance from a test support contractor. This contractor is selected by a competitive bidding process and is responsible for:

1. printing the tests;
2. distributing test booklets and answer sheets;
3. scoring; and
4. providing reports of the test results by individual student, school, district, and state levels.

Districts and schools normally do not have direct contact with the test support contractor but link to the contractor through an Assessment Section staff person.

CHAPTER III

TEST DEVELOPMENT

The Criterion-Referenced Test vs. Norm-Referenced Test

As mentioned previously, the Statewide Assessment Tests are criterion-referenced. A criterion-referenced test is an achievement test comprised of items measuring a student's achievement of pre-defined academic goals or objectives. Often the skill is specified as appropriate to attain within a certain time period or grade level. In Florida these skills are grouped into larger units of Minimum Performance Standards which are measured at grades 3, 5, 8, and 11. Attainment of these standards is the yardstick by which an individual student's achievement is measured.

While scores on a criterion-referenced test indicate a student's achievement with reference to a specific goal or goals, a norm-referenced test score provides achievement information obtained by comparing a student's scores to other students. That is, a norm-referenced score provides achievement information about a student's standing relative to others. If the purpose of giving a test is to classify students from highest to lowest achievement, rather than to assess an individual student's goal attainment, norm-referenced measures are appropriate. Thus, a student's achievement on a test can be expressed in two ways: what a student has learned compared with an established goal or criteria (what he or she should have learned) and how a student ranks compared to other students on the same subject matter.

A norm-referenced score is obtained by converting a student's raw score (the number of correct answers) to a scale that was developed by previously administering the test to other students. This "other" group of students who originally took the test are referred to as the "norm group". Obviously, the composition of the norm group is of great importance in interpreting the test scores. If an average-ability student was compared with a slow group of students, a different placement on a score scale would result than if a comparison was made with very bright students. Use of inappropriate norms could lead to an improper interpretation of the data. It is important that teachers, students, and parents know that a norm is not a standard or a goal! Scoring "at the norm" may very well not be accomplishing anything of merit.

It is not possible to tell a norm-referenced test from a criterion-referenced test by looking at it. The tests may look alike; and further, a criterion-referenced test may be used as a norm-referenced test and vice versa. The major difference is in the type of scores obtained. Again, the

criterion-referenced test score is given in reference to a goal and the norm-referenced test score is obtained in reference to another group of students.

Both criterion-referenced and the norm-referenced test scores can be used to determine the merits of instructional programs. A criterion-referenced test can be used to look at goal or standard attainment; and a norm-referenced test can be used by comparing a student or group of students to a norm group who participated in the instructional program.

Score Reporting Systems for Norm- and Criterion-Referenced Tests

In the case of the norm-referenced test, the most usual scores to be reported to students are converted raw scores often expressed as percentiles, e.g., 80th percentile. This means that a student scored as well as, or better than, 80% of the students in the norm or comparison group. (Of course, this score says nothing about standard or goal achievement.) A norm-referenced score can also be given as a grade-equivalent score. Based on the performance of the comparison group, a grade-equivalent score reflects a conversion of a student's raw score to a grade-and-month-in-school score which is developed by statistical procedures. This system is often criticized as being overly simplistic, misleading, and statistically dangerous. But, because of its simple appearance, some educators are prone to prefer its use.

Criterion-referenced tests, on the other hand, are reported in terms of accomplishment of objectives. Students are classified as masters or non-masters of each skill. Summary data for a school or district is not usually reported as a mean or average score but is reported in terms of the percent of students mastering the skills or a portion of the skills (e.g., 80 percent of the students mastered three-fourths of the skills). This reporting system is very simple, but can lead to confusion when people are not familiar with the idea.

Test Construction Principles

The most important difference in the two kinds of tests from a test construction point of view is the amount of variability desired in test scores. An item writer for a criterion-referenced test uses the criterion or goal itself as a guide. Whether the items are easy or hard, or whether there is much variance in how the students perform, the most important factor to consider is whether or not the item responses reflect the standards measured.

The norm-referenced test writer wants to measure the appropriate skills but also wants the scores to vary since differences or similarities among students is of interest. So, norm-referenced items specifically are designed to spread students' scores out on a scale. Also, the content measured by such a test is sometimes quite broad.

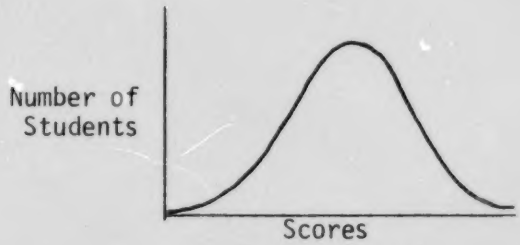
To further illustrate the difference between the two kinds of tests, the criterion-referenced item writer is not dismayed if many students get all

test items correct. But, the norm-referenced item writer strives to obtain a wide range of scores if differentiation between students are to be made (and if test variance is to be present for use with future statistical analyses).

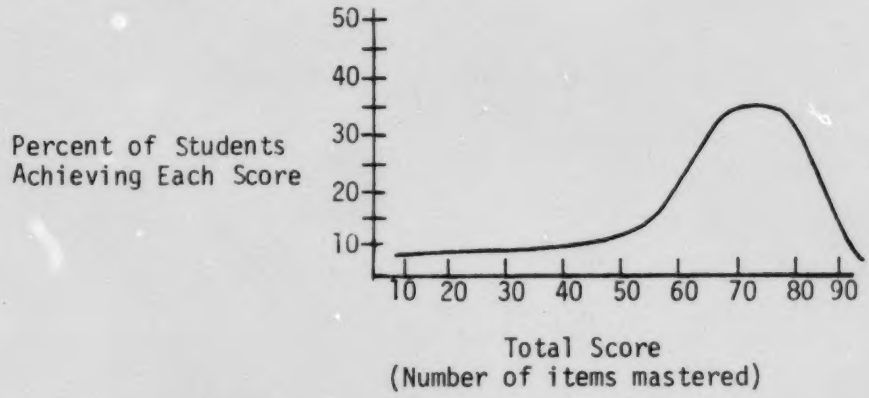
Interpretation of Scores

Another important aspect to be considered is the actual scoring of the two tests. In Florida, a student is expected to attain each of the required performance standards measured by the basic skills test at grades 3, 5, 8 and 11. A student does not obtain a total test score on these tests. Instead, he or she receives information about how many standards are actually attained. For this reason, a student is never classified as "passing" or "failing" the basic skills test (SSAT-I). It follows then that students can not be differentiated easily on a criterion-referenced test unless it is done on only one standard at a time.

Finally, in interpreting criterion-referenced data, the teacher or guidance counselor must be aware of the uniqueness of the distribution of scores for the criterion-referenced tests. That is, the test scores do not adhere to the usual bell curve of a normal distribution as pictured below.



Since Florida's tests measure minimal skills, the normal distribution is not applicable for Statewide Assessment tests (criterion-referenced tests). If the tests measure only the very minimum of what a student should know at a given grade, then most students will attain a high score. It is not unusual to see many students with high scores on such a test. If the number of items students mastered on a criterion-referenced test were summed into a total score, and if these scores were plotted in a graph, it would probably look similar to the one below.



An understanding of the relationship between the type of test and the distribution of test scores obtained is very important when interpreting how well a student does. For instance, many districts ordinarily receive their commercial norm-referenced test results in terms of percentiles. However, if percentiles are used with the State Assessment Tests, students with high scores will not necessarily receive high percentile ranks because there are so many other students who also receive high scores.

The Development of Statewide Assessment Test Items

One of the major tasks of the Statewide Assessment Program is development of the test items. This is a very lengthy procedure and requires great care and expertise. Each item must measure the skill and standard for which it is designed.

First, item specifications have to be created. These specifications describe the manner in which the skill will be measured. For example, various sections of a specification developed for Skill G-14, Grade 5 Mathematics follows:

GRADE	5 - Mathematics G-14
STANDARD	G - The student will subtract whole numbers.
SKILL	14 - Subtract two 4-digit numbers, with only one regrouping.
CLARIFICATION OF SKILL:	See examples

STIMULUS ATTRIBUTES

A. Format
   1. Subtraction problem in either:
      a. Horizontal notation; or
      b. Vertical notation
   2. Commas are to be used properly.

B. Numbers
   1. Two 4-digit whole numbers;
   2. Minuend greater than the subtrahend; and
   3. Chosen such that finding the difference calls for one and only one regrouping.

C. Directions - Subtract

In multiple choice items, specifications for distracters or foils also have to be included. A foil (or distracter) is an incorrect response

(or possible choice). The specifications for the whole set of possible responses to an item, including the correct one, are called Response Attributes and are as follows:

RESPONSE ATTRIBUTES

A. Format
   1. Whole numbers
   2. Commas are to be used properly.

B. Options
   1. Correct response; and
   2. Sum of two numbers; and/or
   3. Failure to regroup (subtract small from large); and/or
   4. Not decreasing the number that is borrowed from;
      i.e., 3,057 (The "8" is subtracted from "17" but the "5"
      -1,028
      2,039

      was not changed to a "4".); and/or
   5. Using a number minus zero equals zero; or
   6. Other subtraction fact errors.

Finally, a sample item is written. Following are two sample items meeting the above-described specification.

SAMPLE ITEM

1. Subtract: 6,235 - 4,170 =

   a. 2,065
   b. 2,145
   c. 2,165
   d. 10,405

2. Subtract:
   3,487
   -1,439

   a. 4,926
   b. 2,058
   c. 2,052
   d. 2,048

When the item specifications are ready, item writing itself can begin. In Florida, test items are created by contractors working with the Student Assessment Section. These contractors may be Florida universities or commercial contractors from within or outside the State.

Items created through this process are subjected to numerous reviews by staff and by special committees of Florida educators. The items ultimately are field-tested with up to 2,000 students through the administration of experimental forms as previously discussed in this chapter. The entire process takes up to two years before items are ready to be used.[1]

Development of the State Student Assessment Test, Part II

Perhaps the greatest immediate impact on Florida's educational system was that portion of the 1976 Accountability Act mandating passage of a test of functional literacy as a graduation requirement. This portion of the law requires all Florida public school students to demonstrate mastery of certain standards and skills as measured by the State Student Assessment Test, Part II (SSAT-II) before they are eligible to receive a regular high school diploma.[2] (The SSAT-II is the name given the mandated functional literacy test.)

After working with Florida school districts and universities, the Florida Statewide Assessment Program contracted with Educational Testing Service (ETS) of Princeton, New Jersey, to develop the items used in the original SSAT-II. The items went through extensive review and were field-tested in March 1977 on a sample of Florida's eleventh grade students.

After the field testing, committees consisting of teachers, administrators, testing specialists and curriculum specialists, reviewed each item for clarity, content, and format. After further revision, the items were organized into the first form of the graduation test which was administered October 1977.

The second version of the SSAT-II, administered in October 1978, included new items prepared under a contract with National Evaluation Systems, Amherst, Massachusetts. Approximately 40% of the original items were replaced with new but similar, or equivalent, items to renew the test and protect its security.

The SSAT-II measured two standards, one in communication skills and one in mathematics skills. The test is designed to measure students' ability to apply the basic skills in both communication skills and mathematics to problems and tasks of a practical nature. Thus, the test consists of

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[1]For a discussion of the technical characteristics of the assessment tests for a particular year, the reader should refer to the annual Technical Report available through the Student Assessment Section, Division of Public Schools, Department of Education.

[2]This requirement has been delayed until 1982-83 by order of the court as a result of the Debra P. vs. Turlington challenge to the graduation test.

what is commonly referred to as "word problems." An example of a typical SSAT-II test item is:

> Florida sales tax rate is 4%.
> How much tax would you have to
> pay on a purchase of $15.00?

The SSAT-II is designed to measure (under the two Minimum Performance Standards) student attainment of 11 communication skills and 13 mathematics skills (see Appendix C for a list of the skills). In that sense, it is a criterion-referenced test. However, the student must achieve an overall score of approximately 70 percent of the items for each of the two test areas of communication skills and mathematics in order to pass.

The State Board of Education has officially named the literacy test the State Student Assessment Test, Part II. Department communications ordinarily refer to it as the SSAT-II.

Further, no claim is made by the Department that "life skills" are being measured by the SSAT-II. There is no attempt being made to predict whether or not students will survive in the real world. For this reason, counselors should exercise great caution in how they interpret student performance on this test.

CHAPTER IV

ADDITIONAL ASSESSMENTS

Adult Education Assessment

The 1976 Accountability Act and the subsequent amendments also are relevant to adult education students. The adult student is one who is not enrolled in the regular day program but is taking a course or courses toward receipt of a high school diploma. These students are required to pass the SSAT-II and demonstrate achievement of all the State Minimum Performance Standards as are regular students. Further, these students must meet the local district course requirements for graduation.

Administration of the SSAT-II is provided four times a year for adult education students. They may take the SSAT-II in October, January, April, and July with certain restrictions. If an adult student takes and fails the test, he or she must wait six months before being eligible to retake the failed section or sections. However, if the student chooses to enroll in remediation classes for the standard which he or she failed, the student will be eligible to retake the test after only three months or at the next test administration.

The GED Alternative

Counselors should be alert to the fact that some teachers, students, and parents may confuse the SSAT-II with the General Educational Development (GED) Test. Students have an alternative to the regular high school diploma through the General Educational Development (GED) testing program. This alternative is for students who wish to graduate early. Any student, sixteen years old or older, who passes the GED Test will receive the State of Florida High School Diploma and will be considered a high school graduate without completing all the other local and state requirements. The GED program and test are, of course, different from the Statewide Assessment Program and the SSAT-II.

Testing in Academic Areas

Both the 1971 and 1976 Accountability Acts provided for special assessments in academic areas other than the basic skills. These special assessments were to be administered as the Commissioner deemed necessary. While the 1974 amendment temporarily tabled this provision, the 1976 Act effected its reinstatement. However, in 1976 special assessments

were not new to the Assessment Program. The first such assessment was conducted in the 1973-74 school year when ninth graders were assessed in the area of science.

Free Enterprise/Consumer/Economic Education Test

The second special assessment was administered four years later in 1978. This assessment was in the area of Free Enterprise/Consumer/Economic Education in compliance with the Consumer Education Act of 1974 which called for an appraisal through competency or performance-based tests of Florida's overall consumer education program.

The Free Enterprise/Consumer/Economic Education Tests were administered during the first two weeks in February 1978 to a representative sample of approximately 1,600 fifth graders and 2,200 eleventh graders. A typical fifth grade objective in this area was to "know the difference between the producer of goods and the producer of services".

The results of these test administrations were reported as an indication of how students were doing statewide. There were no individual student, class, school or district reports of results. However, a report and brochure describing the test and the results for the State student sample was produced and is available from the Student Assessment Section, Department of Education.

Writing Production Test

Another special assessment occurred in the academic year of 1978-79. This was in the writing production area with open-ended questions to which students wrote a response. It was administered to a sample of students in grades 3, 5, 8 and 11 at the same time as the regular assessment. These tests were hand-scored and revealed detailed information about students' abilities to compose understandable sentences, paragraphs, letters, etc. The sample of students who participated included approximately 700 students from each grade. The results indicated third grade students did better than students in the other grades on most of the skills. Fifth and eighth grade students did less well than third graders. Eleventh graders reversed this downward trend somewhat and performed closer to the desired level than eighth graders did. A technical report as well as a brochure of results is available through each District Coordinator of Accountability or the Student Assessment Section, Department of Education.

Exceptional Students

The 1978 legislation (Section 232.247, Florida Statutes) specified special high school graduation requirements resulting in a special diploma for five groups of exceptional students; Educable Mentally Retarded (EMR), Trainable Mentally Retarded (TMR), Specific Learning Disabled (SLD), Deaf or Hearing Impaired (HI), Emotionally Handicapped (EH). In addition, modifications of the

regular tests and procedures were permitted under Subsection 2, of Florida Statutes 232.246. Details of these provisions are provided in Rule 6A-1.943 (Appendix B). If exceptional students took the regular test under one of the modifications provided by Rule 6A-1.943, they would receive a regular diploma; but, if students classified in one of the five (5) groups exempted by Section 232.247, Florida Statutes, followed the special standards applicable to their exceptionality, they would receive a special diploma upon meeting the requirements.

Thus, all exceptional students may take the regular test in terms of content, but with modifications applicable to their exceptionality such as large print or braille. If these exceptional students also meet all other regular student graduation requirements, they will receive a regular diploma. On the other hand, the five exceptionalities exempted under Section 232.247, Florida Statutes, may be awarded special diplomas based upon meeting the graduation requirements for their exceptionality (see SBE Rule 6A-1.945 in Appendix B). The special requirements for SLD students are for mastery of eleventh grade Minimum Performance Standards only, and since the SSAT-II requirement has been postponed for regular students, SLD's currently have the same requirements to be awarded a standard diploma as regular students do.

Similarly, Emotionally Handicapped (EH) students who have mastered the regular eleventh grade Minimum Performance Standards should be awarded a standard diploma. However, Emotionally Handicapped students who are pursuing mastery of the special 11th-year-in-school-EMR-standards (an option allowed in SBE Rule 6A-1.95, FAC) will be eligible for a special diploma. (Note that Emotionally Handicapped students are to master the special Educable Mentally Retarded standards as prescribed by Rule 6A-1.941 (3) FAC if they follow the special requirement route).

The role of the assessment program is to provide the test instruments and to score and report the results of the tests. Reports are available for each exceptional education assessment that has been conducted. Following are the details or status of assessment for these various exceptionalities.

Visually Impaired

Since October of 1977, and as a part of the regular assessment, large print and braille versions of 3rd, 5th, 8th, and 11th grade test booklets have been provided for visually impaired students. In addition, some partially visioned students were tested with the regular test booklets. All visually impaired students in the State participated in the assessments. Reports of the results are available from the Student Assessment Section.

Trainable Mentally Retarded

The Trainable Mentally Retarded (TMR) students were assessed for the first time in 1976 and, again, in 1977. The assessments were based upon the Catalog of Behavioral Objectives for Trainable Mentally Retarded Students (1974) which was developed by the Duval County School Board and the Department of Education. A list of 99 objectives were chosen by

parents, teachers, and community agent personnel. These objectives became the basis for the TMR instrument used in 1976 and 1977. However, testing did not take place in 1978 because Minimum Performance Standards were being developed to enlarge on and replace the original 99 objectives for TMR students. These standards have now been established and test development plans will include this area in the future.

Hearing Impaired

In order to receive a special high school diploma, hearing impaired students must master the 17-year-old Hearing Impaired Minimum Student Performance Standards. The 17-year-old Hearing Impaired students in Florida were assessed on these standards for the first time in April 1978.

The items for the test were selected from the student assessment item pool and were field-tested in the Florida School for the Deaf and Blind. The final test was prepared by the Student Assessment Section. A report of this test administration is available from the Student Assessment Section.

Educable Mentally Retarded

A special set of EMR Minimum Student Performance Standards have been adopted with which EMR students can be tested. To receive a special diploma, EMR students have to meet local requirements and be certified in these special EMR 11th grade standards. In addition, an 11th grade EMR test is currently under development and is scheduled for statewide administration in the spring of 1981. However, graduating EMR students also can receive a standard diploma if they have been certified in the regular student 11th grade Minimum Student Performance Standards and have met all local requirements.

Specific Learning Disabled

The Specific Learning Disabled (SLD) requirements (under SBE Rule 6A-1.95 FAC) include mastery of all 11th grade Minimum Performance Standards but do not require passing the SSAT-II. However, since there has been a delay in requiring passage of the SSAT-II as a graduation requirement for regular students, SLD and regular students must meet the same requirements for receiving a regular diploma.

CHAPTER V

HELPING STUDENTS THROUGH TEST RESULTS

What Can the Counselor Do?

The counselor can play a special role in the success of the Statewide Assessment Program. The fact that testing is a paper and pencil activity does not mean it is not people-oriented. Counselors are key personnel in building positive attitudes toward testing, interpreting the results, and enhancing the assessment program. The counselor's knowledge and interpretation of data from the assessment program can be used as another tool in working with students, parents and school personnel. Three key words counselors might keep in mind in working with students are awareness, attitude, and anxiety.

Awareness

Some students may not be fully aware of the State testing program or may not completely understand the importance of these tests in their school careers. Counselors and teachers can serve as resources in correcting their students' lack of understanding.

To help counselors, teachers and administrators promote awareness about the program and the SSAT-II in particular, the Statewide Assessment Program has produced three key items:

1. A student take-home card for parents of elementary children
2. A question and answer booklet about the SSAT-II for high school students
3. A brochure/poster which describes the SSAT-II

These materials are routinely made available to local school districts, and each school should have copies.

Handouts and posters are effective, but there are ways other than publications that could communicate information about these tests to students. An assembly or group guidance session can be arranged. Announcements giving the testing dates can be placed in a central location of the school several weeks prior to testing. The purpose and role of testing, in general, and the assessment program, specifically, might be included in individual counseling sessions if pertinent to the student's counseling needs. Other ideas for creating awareness are:

1. Development of a filmstrip at the school level
2. Assembly announcements
3. Interesting and clever notices of the pending test administration dates in a daily bulletin or newspaper
4. PTA meetings
5. Simulated test-taking with groups of students, parents and teachers

A creative counselor can find many more approaches for test orientation that are unique to the individual school setting.

Attitude

Developing a healthy, positive attitude toward the assessment tests can improve test scores. While information provided to students may aid in changing negative attitudes there are specific techniques which can be used by counselors to help students develop a good attitude toward test-taking in general.

First of all, find out exactly how students feel about the tests. Develop a simple attitude scale and give it to students individually or in groups. Small group sessions are ideal for sharing feelings and attitudes.

An attitude scale can be as simple as asking students to respond to questions similar to the following:

I like taking tests

1	2	3	4	5
A lot	Somewhat	Very Little	Do Not Like Tests	Hate Tests

If the responses to the attitude questions are predominately in the 4 or 5 category, then some exercises designed to promote a positive attitude may be in order. This, of course, is something that needs to be done over an extended period of time; but, preparing for the Statewide Assessment tests might be a good place to start.

After finding out how the individual or group feels towards testing, ask the student or students to think about when and where their first bad experience with tests originated. If you are working in a group situation and the students' responses are mixed (that is, some have had good experiences with tests and some have had bad), take one negative comment, then one positive. Alternate in this way to enlist a lively, sharing discussion.

Some of the younger children may have a poor attitude toward tests simply because they are unfamilar with a testing situation. For instance, manipulation of test booklets, proper pencils and answer sheets may pose a threat to new test-takers.

If you find this is the case, there are several games or exercises that you can do with students. A good exercise is to have one student draw, with straight lines, a simple pattern from answer space to answer space on an answer sheet. Other students are then given answer sheets. The first student calls off, in order, each item and option through which the line runs. The other students mark their answer sheets to correspond to the item number and answer option as they are announced. The game is to see how well each student's answer sheet pattern agrees with that of the first student. This game not only helps students become familiar with answer sheets, but is good practice in following instructions--an important part of effective test-taking.

Also, for younger children, it may be worthwhile to call out item numbers and have the pupils accurately fill in the bubbles for all options for each number. Check the papers for accurately completed bubbles with clear well-darkened marks. The marks should not go outside the bubble. When machines score tests, some students lose points for light marks, partially filled bubbles, or extraneous marks. As students become more proficient, you can call out an item number and an option instead of having students fill in all bubbles for a particular item. This exercise also familiarizes students with following instructions and finding a particular item and option on an answer sheet efficiently.[1]

After the counselor has learned the feelings of the group or individual through discussion and has familiarized students with test materials, selling the test is now possible. Remember that changing any attitude relies on the strategy of persuasion. In order to gain group acceptance of the tests, a common goal must be found. This common goal must be reasonable and desired by the student.

For instance, the counselor can point out the importance of discovering one's academic strengths and weaknesses and the usefulness of tests to identify students' related mastery or lack of mastery in the basic skills. It can then be pointed out that various methods or strategies are available to assist students in overcoming their learning deficiencies or obstacles to academic progress. Hopefully, when students understand that test results help teachers teach more purposefully, a cooperative teacher/student partnership often develops.

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[1]Hills, John R., Developing Test-Taking Skills. Developed under contract to Department of Education, 1979.

Gaining knowledge of one's strengths and weaknesses can also help in building students' self-confidence. Students need to become aware that both experiences of success and constructively changing failure to success are two important aspects of schooling.

When students become familiar with the testing process and can envision the attainment of some personal goal from the test results, a more positive attitude toward taking the assessment tests should develop.

Anxiety

Some students may be afraid of the assessment tests. There are, of course, several probable reasons for this anxiety. One reason may be due to a student's long standing or generalized anxiety towards tests, or it could be due to the uniqueness of the State Assessment tests. Not only is mastery of the Minimum Performance Standards (SSAT-I) important to a student's progression through school and ultimately receiving a diploma, but both the SSAT-I and the SSAT-II have received wide attention from the press and news reports. Most of this information has been accurate, but there may have been some misinformation which has created student anxiety. If the problem is due to inaccurate or insufficient information, once this is corrected, a student's fears may vanish.

Time should also be made available for students to express their feelings about tests in open discussions. As mentioned in the preceding section, if students have had an opportunity to work through their negative feelings toward tests, they may be able to control their anxiety in future test situations and improve their attitude toward testing. Also, knowing that other students have similar feelings can help students realize they are not alone.

In any event, it may be helpful to plan some specific activities prior to testing to help students manage test anxiety. One of the best ways to reduce this type of anxiety is for students to become test-wise.

Test-wiseness refers to knowledge about the test and testing procedures. The games or exercises discussed in the previous section of this Chapter help students become test-wise. Learning about the format of the test, receiving practice in following directions, and completing a sample answer sheet are all considered activities that create test-wiseness. Students also can prepare by responding to practice multiple-choice tests. Time management skills can be explained such as pacing oneself while taking a test and developing certain techniques such as skipping over difficult problems; answering the easy questions first; and, then, returning to the more difficult ones.

In addition, a course on improving one's study habits can be a major way to help students overcome their lack of knowledge or skill-related problems. As a result, test anxiety or problems specifically related to inadequate academic preparation may be reduced.

Physical preparation for taking a test should not be overlooked. Two of the best ways to control physical tension related to test anxiety are deep breathing and muscle exercises. These techniques are helpful both before and during testing and can be taught to students before the testing session.

What To Do After Tests Are Administered

If time permits, it may be helpful for counselors or teachers to conduct a debriefing session with students in which they can talk about the test questions. Students should also be told approximately when they can expect their test results. Scoring the volume of answer sheets generated by the State Assessment Program takes a great deal of time. Students should be aware of this delay and know that test results will be sent to the schools in four to six weeks.

Which Reports To Use "When"

The most important aspect of the assessment program for local school personnel are the reports of the results. For this reason, the State Student Assessment staff continuously examines methods to best communicate this data. Great care and expertise are exercised in developing the forms upon which the test results appear. For instance, an Individual Student Report form is provided for each student and indicates which items, skills and standards the student mastered. This same information is provided on the Listing of Achievement as a summary report.

The Listing of Achievement aggregates classroom or school data and also lists the achievement of each student in a roster by class or school. Other forms provided by the Assessment Program include a District Report which lists for each school the percent of students mastering every skill and standard along with the percent of students in the State and district mastering the standards.

Training Workbooks and Guide to the Statewide Assessment Results

Examples of report forms are included in a training workbook which is distributed to districts each fall prior to the receipt of results. Regional meetings are conducted throughout the State by the assessment staff in early November to explain the report forms contained in this workbook. In this way, district personnel attending a regional meeting are able to relay the information to teachers and counselors.

Along with the training program, a yearly publication, A Guide to Statewide Assessment Results, is disseminated to all teachers whose students were tested. The Guide contains information on report forms and presents suggestions for interpreting assessment results.

Factors Influencing Test Scores

After the test results are received in the school, a plan should be developed to aid in interpreting and using them. The district and school curriculum personnel may be responsible for deciding who will be involved in interpreting the data and the actual procedure involved. However, the Assessment Program offers a checklist which may serve as a guideline for those who will be relating the scores to curricular programs and instruction (see Appendix D). It is important before examining test scores for an individual student, for a class or even for the total school, that curricular specialists, counselors and other appropriate staff take time to consider various factors which might have affected the scores. Some of the factors to be considered in this type of analysis are presented in the following diagram (Figure 5). Most important, review of the factors in the test administration category of Figure 5 should be made prior to interpretation of the results.

Gaining Student Interest

As the time for receiving the results draws near, students' interest in finding out "how they did" may be stimulated by publicizing the approximate dates for the return of results. Distributing the actual results as soon as they arrive is most important. Usually, students' reactions are focused on whether they "passed." Especially with the assessment tests, students need an explanation beyond just learning their scores. They need help in interpreting scores, understanding the structure of the test and relating results to mastery of standards and skills. In addition, students who fail the SSAT-II or some of the Minimum Performance Standards may not have been aware of their weak achievement areas and will need counseling and encouragement.

In fact, students in the upper grades (particularly fifth, eighth, and eleventh) might benefit from group guidance sessions that discuss the meaning and interpretation of the test results. Even the younger third graders can understand test results when they are told about their "strong" and "weak" areas instead of the "number" of right answers they achieved. Thereafter, counselors or teachers can explain the test results and graphs in greater detail through individual student conferences as needed. Comparisons can be made with the student's previous test results or grades if it seems appropriate to the counselor or teacher.

These kinds of activities following the actual test administration may help relieve the concerns of students who will be taking the test in a subsequent year. When any faculty member does a creditable job of communicating with one group of students, there seems to be payoff with other groups in terms of future credibility.

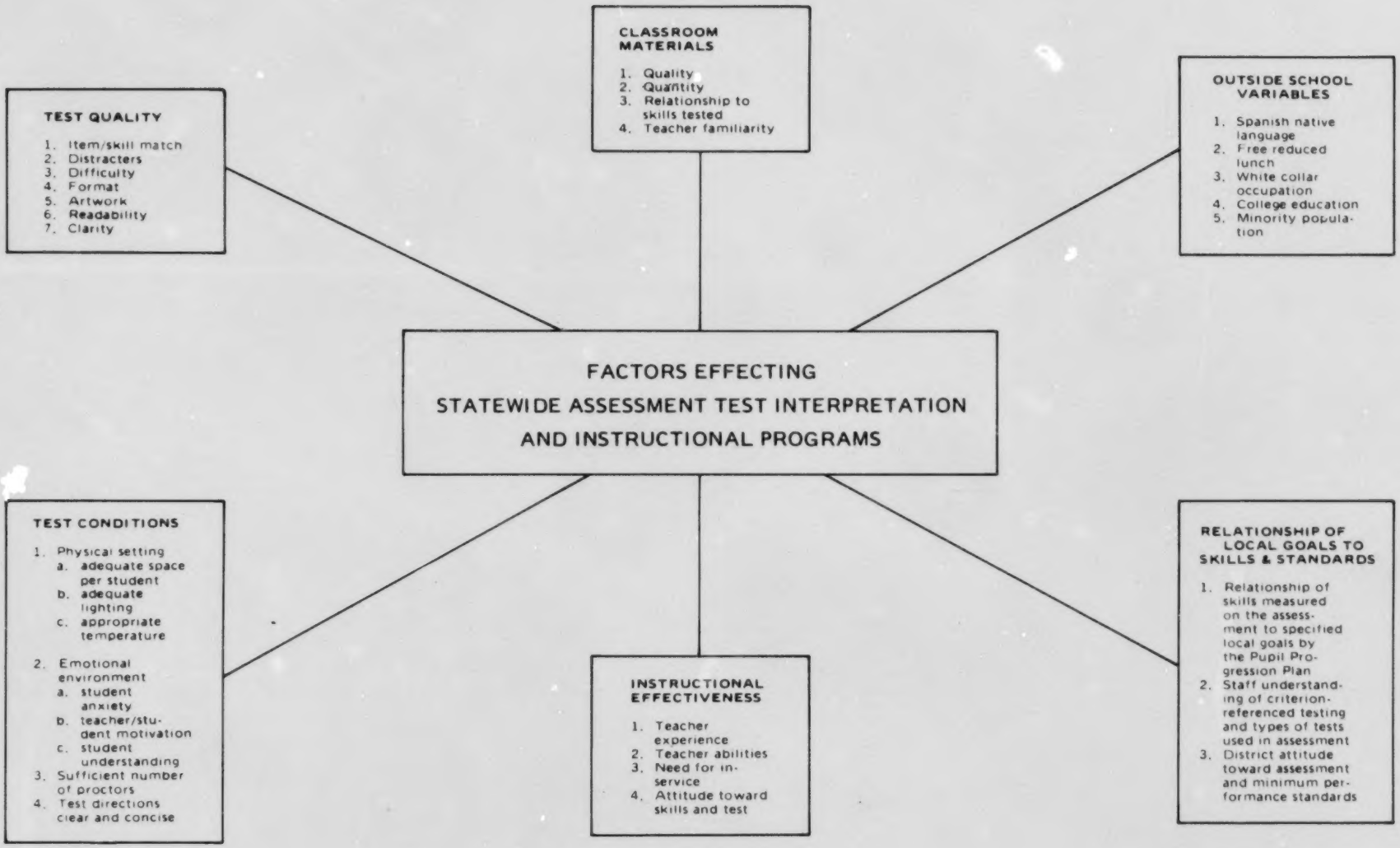
CLASSROOM MATERIALS
1. Quality
2. Quantity
3. Relationship to skills tested
4. Teacher familiarity
TEST QUALITY
1. Item/skill match
2. Distracters
3. Difficulty
4. Format
5. Artwork
6. Readability
7. Clarity
OUTSIDE SCHOOL VARIABLES
1. Spanish native language
2. Free reduced lunch
3. White collar occupation
4. College education
5. Minority population
FACTORS EFFECTING STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT TEST INTERPRETATION AND INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS
TEST CONDITIONS
1. Physical setting
a. adequate space per student
b. adequate lighting
c. appropriate temperature
2. Emotional environment
a. student anxiety
b. teacher/student motivation
c. student understanding
3. Sufficient number of proctors
4. Test directions clear and concise
INSTRUCTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS
1. Teacher experience
2. Teacher abilities
3. Need for in-service
4. Attitude toward skills and test
RELATIONSHIP OF LOCAL GOALS TO SKILLS & STANDARDS
1. Relationship of skills measured on the assessment to specified local goals by the Pupil Progression Plan
2. Staff understanding of criterion-referenced testing and types of tests used in assessment
3. District attitude toward assessment and minimum performance standards

FIGURE 5

Working with Teachers and Parents

An important responsibility of the counselor is to communicate the test results to teachers and parents as soon as possible. The Individual Student Report from the Statewide Assessment Program should be distributed to the teachers and a copy is available for distribution to parents at the discretion of the school and district. There is a letter to parents on the back of the parent copy of the Individual Student Report. This letter provides a brief description of the test and an explanation of the report form in English and Spanish. Since it is brief, the counselor may wish to provide a more detailed explanation of the results to parents.

With teachers, many counselors find that an inservice session regarding the interpretation and possible utilization of test results can answer many questions. Counselors may find that having such sessions through an informal "coffee" for specific grade levels will assist teachers in taking an active role in using test results. Teachers may be able to earn inservice points for extension of certificates if the inservice sessions are planned through the district staff development representative. Following the inservice sessions, individual teacher conferences, if requested, can be an additional method of assistance.

A presentation at a parent-teacher meeting can be valuable in explaining the parent copy of the report form and the total program. In addition, the counselor should have access to the materials prepared by the Assessment Program to help in explaining the major report forms.

The Student Assessment Section prepares a training module each year (noted previously at the beginning of this Chapter) designed to promote understanding and interpretation of the various report forms. This module includes a workbook and audio cassette tape. The workbook and accompanying tape usually arrive in the district in November shortly before test results arrive. The District Accountability Coordinator should have these materials and should distribute them to the schools routinely. (See Chapter VI for a complete list of the available Student Assessment Section materials.)

Along with group training sessions, individual parent-student conferences with the counselor might be advantageous; especially for students with serious learning deficiencies. In this way, the student and parent can discuss with the counselor basic skills deficiencies (at least those measured by the State Assessment Program) and become aware of remedial possibilities.

Working with Administrators

Counselors and school administrators should and can work as a team to promote a supportive and positive attitude toward the assessment program.

Such team-work is essential to the success of the remediation and compensatory education program as well as the actual test administration. In addition, a counselor can help create a positive climate for the remedial classes through supportive efforts with the teachers and curriculum specialists. Counselors also may be called upon by school administrators to help plan, perhaps with others, the placement of students in the remedial classes.

Another use of the assessment test data is the continuity it provides in the placement of new students from other districts or schools. New students can be academically placed according to their assessment scores along with other relevant data. If necessary, these students can be placed in remedial groups based upon State Assessment records of specific standard and skill performance.

Working with Other Student Services Personnel

Counselors work closely with psychologists, school social workers/visiting teachers, and occupational specialists to help meet student needs. Some students may be identified through State Assessment tests for special services. The counselor may use assessment data as one basis for referral of a student to the school psychologists; or the counselor may use it as a basis in working with occupational specialists toward a career education program for specific students. In addition, the counselor could receive assistance from the school social worker/visiting teacher to reach parents in their homes with specific information or help in understanding their child's educational development.

Suggestions for Using Longitudinal Data

The counselor can be instrumental in helping students improve their scores by actually using the test results for several years in career and curricular planning. For instance, an elementary counselor can follow-up a third grader who showed definite deficiencies in several mathematics standards and discover, two years later, improvement made by the student on these same standards on the fifth grade test. Similarly, this procedure can be followed for students moving from eighth to eleventh grade. This cumulative kind of data collection can aid the counselor in predicting a student's later achievement in school or work. Thus, the counselor can give students information to assist them in selecting academic areas which will enhance their strongest achievement interests and strengthen the weaker ones.

Secondary counselors can help students prepare for the exit eleventh grade test requirement (SSAT-II) by examining students' performance on the eighth grade test items that require demonstration of skills or knowledge of practical tasks. For instance, filling out order blanks, completing

checks, figuring tax, etc., are tested as word problems and call for the practical application of basic skills. If eighth or ninth grade students have not achieved these skills, the counselor should let them know remedial instruction appears necessary if they are to perform well on the SSAT-II when they reach eleventh grade.

Using Scores in Program Development

As a major purpose of the Statewide Assessment Program, assessment test scores may be used, along with other indicators of student achievement, to examine a school's progress. Beginning with the 1977 assessment of Minimum Performance Standards, both the basic skills and SSAT-II results are available for possible school or classroom comparisons. In addition, the counselor and other school personnel can examine how well students as a group did on the same skills and standards in a previous year as compared to (1) a later grade level, (2) the same group, the present year, or (3) a different group of students at the same grade level. In this way, faculty and students can see overall improvements as well as deficiencies. This kind of information can help in preparing school progress reports for both parents and the community.

Counselors and curriculum specialists can also recommend curricular program modification for individual students based upon the assessment test scores. If students have shown consistent weaknesses over the last two years on certain skills, their study programs should be changed or intensified in those areas. If there are a large number of students with similar academic problems, the counselor and other school personnel might want to look at the overall school curricular program. As discussed previously, the Statewide Assessment Program offers a checklist in Appendix D of this manual which may serve as a guideline for those who will be relating the scores to curricular and instructional programs.

Remediation

The responsibility for remediation lies with the districts. The ultimate success of the State competency-based testing program depends on how well student deficiencies are corrected in the local districts. The Statewide Assessment results highlight the areas of weaknesses by skills and standards. Obviously, it is up to the teachers to plan activities to improve or strengthen instruction in these areas.

The 1976-77 Legislature appropriated $10 million under the Compensatory Education Act to be distributed to districts based upon academic need. The 1977-78 Legislature also authorized funds in the amount of $26.5 million, and $28.5 million was authorized by the 1978-79 Legislature. This money was to be used for remediating students at either the elementary or secondary level according to the district's decision.

According to the Compensatory Education Act, each district must devise a plan for specific uses of its portion of the state allocated funds. The compensatory education remedial programs are not to be used to supplant the regular student allocation of Title I funds but must supplement existing financing. The plan for the district's compensatory education program is submitted to the State for approval, but the district itself has the responsibility for the program design.

Further, the 1979 Legislature amended Section 232.246(3), Florida Statutes, to provide an additional 13th year in school for any student who was entitled to a Certificate of Completion. These students may choose, as an alternative to accepting the Certificate of Completion, the opportunity of staying in school as a part-or full-time student for one additional year. During this year they will receive special remedial instruction developed and directed specifically to their identified academic deficiencies.

The involvement of the guidance counselor in all the remediation programs will vary, of course, from district to district. There are, however, some specific activities for remediating students which the counselor can initiate or suggest to the instructional staff. These activities are suggested in the checklist noted above and presented in Appendix D .

A Caution

Any discussion of the use of test scores would not be complete without a word of warning or a caution to the user. Important aspects to consider in making judgments about students in relation to their test scores are (1) that no test is infallible and (2) that many factors other than the student's intelligence or knowledge influence assessment test scores.

One of these influencing factors is the daily changes of a physical or psychological nature that affect all individuals. Students become ill, are not feeling up to par, or are not able to concentrate on the test for various reasons. Also, it is impossible to develop a test that does not contain some form of measurement error that may effect a student's score. For example, shades of meanings in test items can effect the student's performance and eventual final score. Often, "errors" of this type are minute but they do need to be considered when examining scores.

Further, it would be wise to examine a student's test score to determine if the score relates to other measures of achievement--classroom participation, written assignments, or grade point averages. If a "C" student misses the average number of items on a test, you might feel the test is functioning for the student as one would expect. If, on the other hand, an "A" student misses more items than other students with far lower class averages, then the counselor should discuss with the student any personal reasons for poor performance. Discussion, examination, and analysis of these and other factors need to be made when examining test results.

CHAPTER VI

MATERIALS AND INFORMATION PROVIDED BY THE ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

The Assessment Program publishes materials which counselors may find useful. (A list of the available publications and materials is included in this Chapter.) An example of one of these publications is A Guide to Statewide Assessment Results which is a yearly publication arriving in the districts with the test results. This comprehensive book provides general information about the program and explains the report forms. The Assessment Section distributes thousands of these booklets across the State and each counselor should have a copy.

The Assessment Section also produces informational brochures and booklets that present specific information about certain aspects of the program. For instance, for the last two years the Assessment Section has produced a booklet titled State Student Assessment Test, Part II: Answers to Your Questions. This publication was developed to provide general information about the SSAT-II for students and parents. Another example of an informational product, which counselors might find helpful, is the student "take-home" card. These cards are for third and fifth grade students to take home to their parents. As well as announcing the approaching test administration, the card provides information about the test. The counselor may wish to send these cards home with the students a few days prior to testing. (It is hoped counselors and teachers will stress the importance of students delivering these cards, and the need for students to be fresh and alert on the day of testing.)

After the test results are available, the Assessment Section produces a State and District Report of Results that provides a summary of the statewide data. This publication lists the percent of students in each district who mastered each Minimum Student Performance Standard and skill. Brochures are developed each year summarizing these same statewide achievement results.

Some counselors may be interested in the more technical aspects of the program. An example of a more technical product is the annual Technical Report with its supplement that presents the item and test development statistics.

All publications are announced through a memorandum to the District Superintendents and sent to the District Coordinators of Accountability. They are distributed primarily through the Accountability Coordinators. In addition, one copy of each publication is sent to the Superintendent of the district.

Along with the publications, the Assessment Section provides information through regional meetings. The District Superintendents usually designate who will attend the regional meetings, but each school counselor may wish to discuss with his/her school principal whether attendance at the meetings can be arranged.

Staff members of the Student Assessment Section are available to answer phone calls and correspondence if the counselor wishes specific information or needs help with a particular problem. The Student Assessment Section can be reached by writing or calling:

Student Assessment Section
Department of Education
580 Knott Building
Tallahassee, Florida 32301
904/488-8198

List of Statewide Assessment Publications and Materials

Following are publications and audio visual materials which have been produced by the Student Assessment Section. They are in the districts and additional copies can be made available as long as the supply lasts.

Development of the Statewide Assessment Program - A chronology from 1971 (Updated annually)

Capsule Report, 1975-76

Capsule Report, 1976-77

Capsule Report, 1977-78

School Predicted Scores, 1975-76

Third and Fifth Grade Predicted Scores, 1976-77

Third and Fifth Grade Predicted Scores, 1977-78

Guide to Predicted Graphs - 1976-77

Guide to Predicted Graphs - 1977-78

An Analysis of the Results of the Florida Educational Assessment Using the NAEP Model, Reading and Mathematics, 1974-75

A Summary of Reading Results: NAEP, 1974-75

A Summary of Mathematics Results: NAEP, 1974-75

"Everyone's Concern" - A brochure, Summary of NAEP, 1974-75

State and District Report of Results, 1978-79

Florida Statewide Assessment of Trainable Mentally Retarded , Technical Report 1975-76

Special Assessment of Trainable Mentally Retarded 10-14 years olds, 1977 Administration

Special Assessment of Educable Mentally Retarded, 1977 Administration

Special Assessment for the Visually Impaired, 1977-78

Special Basic Skills Assessment for 17-year-old Hearing Impaired Students, 1978

Florida Norm-Referenced Test Results: Grade 5 Reading, Spring 1976

1977-78 Technical Report

1977-78 Technical Report Statistical Summary

1978-79 Technical Report

1978-79 Technical Report Statistical Summary

"Helping Teachers Help Students", Filmstrip, 1976

"Statewide Assessment, Who needs it?", Filmstrip, 1977

Teacher Test Results Folder, 1978

Teacher Test Results Folder, 1979

Student Take-Home Card, 1978

Student Take-Home Card, 1979

Workbook - (Slide tape), "Reading the 1977-78 Assessment Reports"

Workbook - (Transparencies, tape), "Reading the 1978-79 Assessment Reports"

Workbook - (Tape) - "Reading the 1979-80 Assessment Reports"

A Guide to 1977-78 Statewide Assessment Results

A Guide to 1978-79 Statewide Assessment Results

Basic Skills Test Results 1976-77, Brochure

Basic Skills Test Results 1977-78, Brochure

Basic Skills Test Results 1978-79, Brochure

"The Test" Brochure, 1977-78

"The Test" Brochure, 1978-79

SSAT-II "Answers to Your Questions", 1978-79

SSAT-II "Answers to Your Questions", 1979-80

Construct Validity of the Florida Functional Literacy Test, 1978

Functional Literacy in Mathematics, 1978

Developing Test-Taking Skills, 1979

Florida Minimal Writing Skills Assessment, Scoring and Reporting Project, Final Report, 1978-79

"Can Johnny Write?" Student Writing Performance in Florida Public Schools, 1978-79

Free Enterprise/Consumer/Economic Education Assessment Questions and Answers Brochure, 1978

Glossary of Common Assessment Terms For Use With Florida's Statewide Assessment Program

1. Achievement Test. Measures what a student has learned, achieved or mastered (often in a subject area such as chemistry, English--or in basic skills).

2. Answer Folder/Document. A scannable document on which students place their answers to questions by filling in the space provided.

3. Aptitude Test. Measures a student's potential in a specific area, e.g., academic, scientific, clerical, language, etc.

4. Assessment. A measurement of "what is" or current status; to evaluate.

5. Basic Skills. The rudiments or fundamentals of academic learning. The primary elements of reading, writing, and arithmetic such as number concepts, reading for the main idea, simple punctuation, etc.

6. Behavioral Objectives are goals of instruction which are stated in terms of precisely identified, observable behaviors. The behaviors are indicators to teachers or evaluators of pupils' learning.

7. Content or Curricular Validity establishes the correspondence between the content of a test and the content of the course for which the test is used.

8. Criterion used in an assessment test sense refers to a level or standard of performance.

9. Criterion-Referenced Test. A test designed to measure student achievement of a specific goal or objective. A criterion-referenced test determines the extent to which a student has mastered a specific domain of behavior (criterion behavior), standards or skills.

10. Cultural Bias in measurement refers to factors in item development, test administration, and interpretation of results which favor or penalize members of specific cultural groups.

11. Discriminating Power refers to the ability of a test to differentiate among individuals who possess different levels of skill in the attribute being measured.

12. Distracter. The incorrect answer choices in a test item; sometimes called a foil.

13. Double Grid. An asterisk symbol on Florida's Assessment report forms that indicates a student shaded in two or more spaces or "bubbles" for one item on the answer document.

14. Field Test. An administration of test items given on a sample of subjects only to gain knowledge about the test items prior to completing development of a test.

15. Florida Accountability Act. Legislation initially enacted in 1971 and updated several times but particularly in 1976. This legislation provided for assessing the educational programs offered by Florida public schools through the establishment of statewide basic skills objectives and subsequent testing of student achievement of objectives at various grade levels. The 1976 legislation expanded the earlier legislation and provided for (1) the assessment of students in grades 3, 5, 8, and 11, (2) a district system of promotion, (3) a state-level management information system, (4) passage of a test of functional literacy as a requirement for receiving a high school diploma, and (5) a remedial program for students who do not master the required Minimum Performance Standards.

16. Foil. Other incorrect answer choices in a test item; a distracter.

17. Format. The layout of the test booklet (spacing, print size, etc.).

18. A Frequency Distribution is an arrangement of scores gathered from a group of individuals to show the number of scores (frequency) falling within various intervals (distribution) on the measurement scale being used.

19. Invalid Test Score refers to when a student's test answers are not scored due to absence for some part of the test administration because of sudden illness, emergency or cheating.

20. Item Analysis refers to any one of a number of processes used in test construction to determine the effectiveness, difficulty, and discriminating power of an item.

21. Item Bias is an item, or a procedure in using the item, that systematically misleads or deviates from that which is correct; or if the item measures different things in different groups. Test bias, however, is often used to indicate a group of test questions which favor or discriminate against a particular group of students because of their sex, racial/ethnic group, or regional background.

22. Item Difficulty is determined by the percentage of individuals who answered an item right. If ninety percent of the examinees were to answer an item correctly, the item would be easy. Conversely, if only ten percent of the examinees were able to answer it correctly, the item would be difficult.

23. Item Review. A process whereby items are critiqued by various groups of educators throughout the State.

24. Item Specifications. A statement of those attributes which an item should possess depending upon and related to the skill measured (e.g., specified form for the item, components, required operation and response).

25. Key. A list or indication of the correct answer for each item.

26. A Local Norm, as opposed to a national norm, is based on the performance of examinees in a particular, but generally not widespread, area.

27. Mean. The average of a set of scores. It is calculated by summing all scores and dividing by the number of scores.

28. Minimum Competency test measures a particular minimum number of skills (competencies) necessary to function effectively in the task area which the test measures.

29. Norm is the average (expected) score on a test for the members of a particular group.

30. Norm Group is a group of previously examined individuals from which one establishes a norm.

31. Normal Distribution refers to an ideal frequency distribution in which the scores cluster around the mean, then taper off at the extremes. Graphically, the phenomenon is represented by a bell-shaped curve.

32. Norm-Referenced test compares a student with other students. Norms for locally (classroom), regionally, or nationally sampled comparison groups may be established to interpret how one student compares to other students.

33. Objectives. Those academic goals that students are expected to accomplish.

34. Objective Test is characterized by being scored with a list of correct answers which allows the scorer to avoid subjective evaluation of the student's performance. Multiple-choice, true-false, and matching item tests are examples of objective tests. Short answer and completion item tests may involve some subjectivity; hence these are typically not considered objective.

35. Percentile Rank. A method of ranking students from 0 to 100 based upon the number of scores in the test score distribution which fall at or below any given score (e.g., a percentile rank of 80 indicates 80% of the students' scores fell at or below the 80th percentile). A percentile rank does not indicate how well or how poorly students score on the test except relative to other students.

36. Quarter Report. A report produced by Florida Student Assessment Program which indicates the percentage of students achieving 0-25%, 26-50%, 51-75%, and 76-100% of the skills measured on the Florida Statewide Assessment Tests.

37. Random Sample is a sample drawn without bias from a specified population usually on the basis of a table of random numbers.

38. Raw Score is the first quantitative result obtained when scoring a test (frequently the number of correct responses).

39. Reliability. An indication of the stability or consistency of test results or the degree to which a test is internally consistent.

40. Standard Deviation (S.D.) is a measure of the dispersion of variability of scores around their mean.

41. Standard Score is a score expressed as a deviation from the mean in terms of the standard deviation of the distribution (raw score minus the mean of the group, divided by the standard deviation of the group).

42. Standardized Test is one which has (1) a set of prescribed directions for the test's administration, (2) definite rules for scoring, and (3) norms for score interpretation.

43. Student Assessment Test, Part I refers to the basic skills test administered at 11th grade. The basic skills tests at grades 3, 5, and 8 are referred to as the State Student Assessment Tests.

44. State Student Assessment Test, Part II. The functional literacy section of the 11th grade test required for high school graduation.

45. Test Item is a test question.

46. Test Support Contractor. The company under contract to the Florida Department of Education which provides printing and distribution of test materials, scoring and reporting of results.

47. Validity. The degree to which a test measures what it is intended to measure. Three types of validity are content, construct, and predictive. Strictly speaking, tests are not valid, score interpretations are.

APPENDIX A

Legislation Related to the Statewide Assessment Program

1976 Pupil Progression Plan

232.245 Pupil progression.—

(1) By July 1, 1977, each district school board shall establish a comprehensive program for pupil progression which shall be based upon an evaluation of each pupil's performance, including how well he masters the minimum performance standards approved by the state board.

(2) The district program for pupil progression shall be based upon local goals and objectives which are compatible with the state's plan for education and which supplement the minimum performance standards approved by the State Board of Education. Particular emphasis, however, shall be placed upon the pupil's mastery of the basic skills, especially reading, before he is promoted from the 3rd, 5th, 8th, and 11th grades. Other pertinent factors considered by the teacher before recommending that a pupil progress from one grade to another shall be prescribed by the district school board in its rules.

(3) Beginning with the 1978-1979 school year, each district school board shall establish standards for graduation from its secondary schools. Such standards shall include, but not be limited to, mastery of the basic skills and satisfactory performance in functional literacy as determined by the State Board of Education and the completion of the minimum number of credits required by the district school board. Each district shall develop procedures for the remediation of [1][the deficiencies of] those students who are unable to meet such standards. Based on these standards, each district shall provide for the awarding of certificates of attendance and may provide for differentiated diplomas to correspond with the varying achievement levels or competencies of its secondary students.

History.—s. 15, ch. 76-223.

[1]Note.—Bracketed language inserted by the editors.

1976 Educational Evaluation Procedures

229.565 Educational evaluation procedures.—

(1) MINIMUM STANDARDS.—The State Board of Education shall approve minimum student performance standards in the various program categories and chronological grade levels, especially in reading, writing, and mathematics, which the Commissioner of Education determines shall best indicate the status of the state system of public education.

(2) EDUCATION EVALUATION.—The Commissioner of Education shall periodically examine and evaluate procedures, records, and programs in each district to determine compliance with law and rules established by the state board. Such evaluations shall include, but not be limited to:

(a) Reported full-time equivalent membership in each program category.

(b) The organization of all special programs to ensure compliance with law and the criteria established and approved by the state board pursuant to the provisions of this section and ss. 230.23(4)(m) and 233.0682.

(c) The procedures for diagnosis and placement of students in special programs for exceptional students, to determine that the district is following the criteria for placement established by rules of the state board and the procedures for placement established by that district school board.

(d) An evaluation of the standards by which the school district evaluates basic and special programs for quality, efficiency, and effectiveness.

(e) Determination of the ratio of administrators to teachers in each school district, which information shall be reported to the Legislature as a part of the commissioner's report required by s. 229.575(1).

(f) Compliance with the cost accounting and reporting requirements of s. 237.34 and the extent to which the percentage expenditure requirements therein are being met.

(3) ASSISTANCE AND ADJUSTMENTS.—If discrepancies or deficiencies are found, the Commissioner of Education shall provide information and assistance to the superintendent and personnel of the district in correcting the cited deficiencies. If it is determined that approved criteria and procedures for the placement of students and the conduct of programs have not been followed by the district, appropriate adjustments in that district's full-time equivalent student count shall be made, and any excess funds shall be deducted from subsequent allocations of state funds to that district.

History.—s. 5, ch. 76-223.

229.57 Student assessment testing programs.—

(1) STATEWIDE TESTING.—The primary purpose of the statewide testing program is to provide information needed for state-level decisions. The program shall be designed to:

(a) Assist in the identification of educational needs at the state, district, and school levels.

(b) Assess how well districts and schools are meeting state goals and minimum performance standards.

(c) Provide information to aid in the development of policy issues and concerns.

(d) Provide a basis for comparisons among districts and between districts and the state and the nation, when appropriate.

(e) Produce data which can be used to aid in the identification of exceptional educational programs or processes.

(2) THE STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT PROGRAM.—The commissioner is directed to implement a program of statewide assessment testing which shall provide for the improvement of the operation and management of the public schools. The statewide program shall be timed, as far as possible, so as not to conflict with ongoing district assessment programs. As part of the program the commissioner shall:

(a) Establish, with the approval of the state board, minimum performance standards related to the goals for education contained in the state's plan, including, but not limited to, basic skills in reading, writing, and mathematics. The minimum performance standards shall be approved by April 1 in each year they are established, for a period of no less than 3, or more than 5, years.

(b) Develop and administer in the public schools a uniform, statewide program of assessment to determine, periodically, educational status and progress and the degree of achievement of approved minimum performance standards. The uniform statewide program shall consist of testing in grades 3, 5, 8, and 11 and may include the testing of additional grades and skill areas as specified by the commissioner.

(c) Develop and administer, as needed in the public schools, a uniform, statewide program of assessment of special programs as defined in s. 236.081(1)(c).

(d) Monitor the results of the assessment program and, at any time the composite student performance of a school or basic program is found to be below the established minimum standards, notify the district superintendent, the school principal, and the school advisory committee or other existing parent group of this situation within 30 days of its determination. The commissioner shall further provide technical assistance to the district in the identification of the causes of this deficiency and shall recommend courses of action for its correction.

(e) Provide technical assistance to the school districts, when requested, in the development of student performance standards in addition to the established minimum statewide standards.

(3) DISTRICT ASSESSMENT PROGRAMS.—Each district shall periodically assess student performance and achievement in each school. Such assessment programs shall be based upon local goals and objectives which are compatible with the state's plan for education and which supplement the minimum performance standards approved by the State Board of Education. Data from district assessment programs shall be provided to the commissioner when such data are required in order to evaluate specific instructional programs or processes or when the data are needed for other research or evaluation projects. Each district may provide acceptable, compatible district assessment data to substitute for any assessment data needed at the state level when the commissioner certifies that such data are acceptable for the purposes of this section.

History.—ss. 1-4, ch. 71-197; s. 1, ch. 74-205; s. 6, ch. 76-223.

232.245 Pupil progression.—

(1) By July 1, 1977, each district school board shall establish a comprehensive program for pupil progression which shall be based upon an evaluation of each pupil's performance, including how well he masters the minimum performance standards approved by the state board.

(2) The district program for pupil progression shall be based upon local goals and objectives which are compatible with the state's plan for education and which supplement the minimum performance standards approved by the State Board of Education. Particular emphasis, however, shall be placed upon the pupil's mastery of the basic skills, especially reading, before he is promoted from the 3rd, 5th, 8th, and 11th grades. Other pertinent factors considered by the teacher before recommending that a pupil progress from one grade to another shall be prescribed by the district school board in its rules.

History.—s. 15, ch. 76-223; s. 1, ch. 77-174; s. 4, ch. 78-424.

1978 General Requirements for High School Graduation

232.246 General requirements for high school graduation.—

(1) Beginning with the 1978-1979 school year, each district school board shall establish standards for graduation from its schools which shall include as a minimum:

(a) Mastery of the minimum performance standards in reading, writing, and mathematics for the 11th grade, established pursuant to ss. 229.565 and 229.57, determined in the manner prescribed by rules of the state board;

(b) Demonstrated ability to successfully apply basic skills to everyday life situations as measured by a functional literacy examination developed and administered pursuant to rules of the state board; and

(c) Completion of a minimum number of academic credits, and all other applicable requirements prescribed by the district school board pursuant to s. 232.245.

(2) The state board shall make provision in its rules required herein for appropriate modification of testing instruments and procedures for students with identified handicaps or disabilities in order to ensure that the results of the testing represent the student's achievement, rather than reflecting the student's impaired sensory, manual, speaking, or psychological process skills, except where such skills are the factors the test purports to measure.

(3) A student who meets all requirements prescribed in subsection (1) shall be awarded a standard diploma in a form prescribed by the state board; provided that a school board may, in lieu of the standard diploma, award differentiated diplomas to those exceeding the prescribed minimums. A student who completes the minimum number of credits and other requirements prescribed by paragraph (1)(c), but is unable to meet the standards of paragraph (1)(a) or paragraph (1)(b), shall be awarded a certificate of completion in a form prescribed by the state board.

History.—s. 1, ch. 78-434.

1978 Special High School Graduation Requirements for Certain Exceptional Students

232.247 Special high school graduation requirements for certain exceptional students.—A student who has been properly classified, in accordance with rules established by the state board, as "educable mentally retarded," "trainable mentally retarded," "deaf," "specific learning disabled," or "emotionally handicapped" shall not be required to meet all requirements of s. 232.246 and shall, upon meeting all applicable requirements prescribed by the school board pursuant to s. 232.245, be awarded a special diploma in a form prescribed by the state board; provided, however, that such special graduation requirements prescribed by the school board shall include minimum graduation requirements as prescribed by the state board. Nothing provided in this section, however, shall be construed to limit or restrict the right of an exceptional student solely to a special diploma. Any such student shall, upon proper request, be afforded the opportunity to fully meet all requirements of s. 232.246 through the standard procedures established therein and thereby qualify for a standard diploma upon graduation.

History.—s. 2, ch. 78-434.

1978 Confidentiality of Assessment Instruments

232.248 Confidentiality of assessment instruments.—All examination and assessment instruments, including developmental materials and work papers directly related thereto, which are prepared, prescribed, or administered pursuant to ss. 229.57, 232.245, 232.246, and 232.247 shall be exempt from the provisions of s. 119.07 and from ss. 229.781 and 230.331. Provisions governing access, maintenance, and destruction of such instruments and related materials shall be prescribed by rules of the state board.
History.—s. 3, ch. 78-424.

1979 Thirteenth Year

236.0815 Inclusion of certain students within basic program.--A student who has completed the credit requirements for graduation prescribed by the school board pursuant to s. 232.246, but has not mastered the basic skills or functional literacy requirements therein, and is being provided special instruction designed to remedy his identified deficiencies, shall not be reported in membership in the basic program of grades 10, 11, and 12 as provided by s. 236.081 beyond his senior year. The additional educational services provided these students shall be funded from the district's receipts of state compensatory funds.

APPENDIX B

State Board of Education Administrative Rules

Minimum Student Performance Standards

6A-1.941 Minimum student performance standards. State adopted minimum student performance standards approved by the State Board of Education are contained in the publications listed below which are hereby incorporated by this rule and made a part of the rules of the State Board of Education. Copies of these publications may be obtained from the Educational Products Distribution Section, Department of Education, Tallahassee, Florida 32301 at a price to be established by the Commissioner but which shall not exceed actual cost.

(1) Minimum student performance standards for Florida schools 1977-78 — 1980-81 grades 3 and 5 — reading, writing, and mathematics.

(2) Minimum student performance standards for Florida schools 1977-78 — 1980-81 grades 8 and 11 — reading, writing, and mathematics.

(3) Minimum student performance standards for Florida schools 1977-78 — 1979-80 exceptional students — reading, writing, and mathematics.

(4) Minimum student performance standards for Florida schools 1981-82 — 1984-85, begnning grades 3, 5, 8, and 11 — reading, writing, and mathematics.

(5) Minimum student performance standards for Florida schools 1980-81 — 1984-85, exceptional students in the following programs:

(a) Hearing impaired students.

1 Age 5 — Developmental skills, auditory development, language development, writing (penmanship), and mathematics.

2. Ages 9, 11, 14 and 17 — Reading, writing, and mathematics.

(b) Educable mentally retarded students. Grades 3, 5, 8, and 11 — Reading, writing, mathematics, social-personal skills, and basic career skills.

(c) Trainable mentally retarded students. Grades 3, 5, 8, and 11 — Fundamental skills, social skills, and pre-vocational skills.

Specific Authority 229.053(1), 229.565(1) FS. Law Implemented 229.053(2)(a), 229.565(1), 229.57(2)(a)(c) FS. History—New 4-28-77, Amended 5-24-79, 7-16-79.

State Student Assessment Test Requirements for Graduation

6A-1.942 State student assessment test requirements for graduation from high school. Mastery of minimum performance standards in reading, writing, and mathematics for the eleventh grade, and demonstrated ability to sucessfully apply basic skills to everyday life situations, as required by Section 232.246(1)(b), Florida Statutes, shall be determined in the manner prescribed below:

(1) Mastery of minimum performance standards.

(a) Minimum performance standards in reading, writing, and mathematics for the eleventh grade are prescribed in Rule 6A-1.941, FAC. For each standard, one (1) or more performance skills are prescribed. The ability of a student to perform a

specific skill is measured by two (2) or more test questions. A test to be designated the State Student Assessment Test — Part I, comprising two (2) or more questions determined to be appropriate to measure each of the skills selected to be measured shall be developed under the direction and supervision of the director, division of public schools, and shall be:

1. Kept secured at all times,

2. Provided to all school districts in the quantity needed for the students in the district,

3. Administered in accordance with standard written instructions appropriate for the examination, and

4. Revised and updated as needed.

(b) A secondary student shall be deemed to have satisfactorily mastered a minimum performance standard on Part I of the State Student Assessment Test when, previous or subsequent to the effective date of this rule, he or she on any administration of that test, correctly answers the number of questions prescribed in subparagraph 1. below:

1. Mastery of each standard shall be determined by correctly answering the number of questions which measure that standard prescribed herein.

When the Number of Questions to Measure a Standard is as Follows:	The Minimum Number of Questions Required to be answered Correctly Shall be as Follows:
2	1
3	2
4	3
5	4
6	5
7	5
8	6
9	7
10	7
11	8
12	9
13	10
14	10
15	11
16	12
17	12
18	13
19	14
20	14
21	15
22	16
23	17
24	17
25	18

2. Mastery of each skill shall be determined by correctly answering the number of questions prescribed herein.

When the Number of Questions to Measure a Skill is as Follows:	The Minimum Number of Questions Required to be Answered Correctly Shall be as Follows:
2	1 of 2
3	2 of 3
4	3 of 4
5	4 of 5
6	5 of 6
7	5 of 7
8	6 of 8
9	7 of 9
10	7 of 10
11	8 of 11
12	9 of 12
13	10 of 13
14	10 of 14
15	11 of 15
16	12 of 16

(c) In order to meet the minimum requirements for a high school diploma each student must demonstrate mastery of each of the eleventh grade minimum performance standards on which he or she is tested.

(d) If a secondary student fails to master one (1) or more of the minimum performance standards on which he or she is tested, the district school board shall :

1. Provide special instructional assistance for each such student in a manner deemed most appropriate by policies of the district school board. Such special assistance may take the form of:

a. Informal consultation between student and teacher,

b. Tutoring of one student by another student,

c. Structured or non-structured independent study,

d. Special classroom study of short duration (1 to 5 days),

e. Special classroom study of longer duration, or

f. Such other appropriate form as determined by the district school board;

OR

2. Provide an opportunity for the student to demonstrate mastery of the standard by taking a comparable examination on similar material or by other means.

3. When the school, through the district prescribed criteria, has determined that each such student has successfully mastered the identified area or areas of deficiency, the student shall be deemed to have mastered such standard or standards and a notation of the mastery shall be recorded in the student's cumulative record. If the student has previously been awarded a certificate of completion in lieu of a regular high school diploma by virtue of failure to pass the State Student Assessment Test — Part I, such student shall be awarded a regular high school diploma. Appropriate instructional assistance and adequate opportunity to be re-tested so as to demonstrate mastery of standards shall remain available to each student until such time as the student successfully demonstrates mastery of each standard.

(e) The State Student Assessment Test — Part I shall not be administered to adults who have legally left the secondary school system. However, prior to awarding an adult a high school diploma the school district shall determine on the basis of appropriate school or district criteria that the adult has mastered each of the eleventh grade minimum performance standards prescribed in Rule 6A-1.941, FAC.

(2) State Student Assessment Test — Part II.

(a) The student examination required by Section 232.246(1)(b), Florida Statutes, shall be developed and administered under the supervision of the director, division of public schools. The

examination shall be developed in consultation with teachers and other appropriate professionals and shall be approved by the Commissioner prior to being administered to students. The test shall be:

1. Designed to measure the student's ability to successfully apply basic skills to everyday life situations.

2. Composed of two (2) standards, one (1) comprising functional communications skills and one (1) comprising functional mathematics skills, as follows:

a. Communications.

The student will, in a real world situation, determine the main idea inferred from a selection.

The student will, in a real world situation, find who, what, where, which, and how information in a selection.

The student will, in a real world situation, determine the inferred cause and effect of an action.

The student will, in a real world situation, distinguish between facts and opinions.

The student will, in a real world situation, identify an unstated opinion.

The student will, in a real world situation, identify the appropriate source to obtain information on a topic.

The student will, in a real world situation, use an index to identify the location of information requiring the use of cross-references.

The student will use highway and city maps.

The student will include the necessary information when writing letters to supply or request information.

The student will complete a check and its stub accurately.

The student will accurately complete forms used to apply for a driver's license, employment, entrance to a school or training program, insurance, and credit.

b. Mathematics.

The student will determine the elapsed time between two (2) events stated in seconds, minutes, hours, days, weeks, months, or years.

The student will determine equivalent amounts of up to one hundred dollars ($100.00) using coins and paper currency.

The student will determine the solution to real world problems involving one (1) or two (2) distinct whole number operations.

The student will determine the solution to real world problems involving decimal fractions or percents and one (1) or two (2) distinct operations.

The student will determine the solution to real world problems involving comparison shopping.

The student will determine the solution to real world problems involving rate of interest and the estimation of the amount of simple interest.

The student will determine the solution to real world problems involving purchases and a rate of sales tax.

The student will determine the solution to real world problems involving purchases and a rate of discount given in fraction or percent form.

The student will solve a problem related to length, width, or height using metric or customary units up to kilometers and miles, conversion within the system.

The student will solve a problem involving the area of a rectangular region using metric or customary units.

The student will solve a problem involving capacity using units given in a table (milliliters, liters, teaspoons, cups, pints, quarts, gallons), conversion within the system.

The student will solve a problem involving weight using units given in a table (milligrams, grams, kilograms, metric tons, ounces, pounds, tons), conversion within the system.

The student will read and determine relationships described by line graphs, circle graphs, and tables.

3. Revised and updated at least annually.

(b) The State Student Assessment Test — Part II shall be administered in cooperation with district school boards, at least four (4) times during each school year.

1. The test shall be scheduled at least twice each year for secondary students who are classified as high school juniors or seniors. The division of public schools and the district school boards shall cooperate to the extent practicable in using other scheduled administrations to accommodate migrant students, transfer students, and others who are unable to be tested on the designated dates.

2. An adult who has earned sufficient credits to be classified as a high school junior or senior may take the examination initially at any scheduled administration. If the adult is currently enrolled in an appropriate adult education program, he or she may retake the examination at any subsequent administration. If the adult is not currently enrolled in an appropriate educational program, he or she may not retake the examination until at least the second administration next following the most recent examination taken.

(c) In order to qualify for a high school diploma, each secondary or adult student must successfully complete both the communications standard and the mathematics standard as prescribed herein. A student shall be deemed to have demonstrated ability to successfully apply basic skills to everyday life situations as measured by the State Student Assessment Test — Part II when, previous or subsequent to the effective date of this rule, he or she on any administration of the test, correctly answers the number of questions prescribed in subparagraph 1. below:

1. Mastery of each standard shall be determined by correctly answering the number of questions which measure that standard prescribed herein.

When the Number of Questions to Measure a Standard is as Follows:	The Minimum Number of Questions Required to Be Answered Correctly Shall be as Follows:
55	39
56	40
57	40
58	41
59	42
60	42
61	43
62	44
63	45
64	45
65	46
66	47
67	47
68	48

69	49
70	49
71	50
72	51
73	52
74	52
75	53

2. Mastery of a skill shall be determined by correctly answering the number of questions prescribed herein.

When the Number of Questions to Measure a Skill is as Follows:	The Minimum Number of Questions Required to be Answered Correctly Shall be as Follows:
4	3 of 4
5	4 of 5
6	5 of 6
7	5 of 7
8	6 of 8
9	7 of 9
10	7 of 10

(3) No time limit shall be established for answering the questions on Part II of the State Student Assessment Test; provided, however, that no student shall be permitted to answer test items which have been seen by the student at a time other than at the examination session in which the test questions are given to the student.

(4) If a student fails to master the communications standard and/or the mathematics standard as prescribed herein, the district school board shall provide special instructional assistance for such student in a manner deemed most appropriate by policies of the district school board.

(a) Such special assistance may take the form of:

1. Informal consultation between student and teacher,

2. Tutoring of one student by another student,

3. Structured or non-structured independent study,

4. Special classroom study of short duration (1 to 5 days),

5. Special classroom study of longer duration, or

6. Such other appropriate form as determined by the district school board.

(b) When the student successfully masters the standards a notation of the mastery shall be recorded in the student's cumulative record and if the student has previously been awarded a certificate of completion in lieu of a regular high school diploma by virtue of failure to pass the State Student Assessment Test — Part II, such student shall be awarded a regular high school diploma. Appropriate instructional assistance and adequate opportunity to be re-tested so as to demonstrate mastery of standards shall remain available to each student until such time as the student successfully demonstrates mastery of each standard.

(5) The scoring method and criteria prescribed herein for the State Student Assessment Test — Part I shall be applied to the eleventh grade basic skills tests administered in 1977-78 and the scoring method and criteria prescribed herein for the State Student Assessment Test — Part II shall be applied to the functional literacy tests administered in 1977-78. All required rescoring of the 1977-78 tests shall be accomplished prior to the administration of the State Student Assessment Tests — Part I and Part II authorized herein.

(6) Definitions.

(a) The term "State Student Assessment Test — Part I" as used in this rule means the tests by which mastery of the minimum performance standards in reading, writing, and mathematics for grade 11 adopted in Rule 6A-1.941, FAC, is demonstrated to implement the provisions of Sections 229.565, 229.57, 232.246, 232.247, Florida Statutes.

(b) The term "State Student Assessment Test — Part II" as used in this rule means the student examination required by Section 232.246(1)(b), Florida Statutes.

(7) Invalidity of a section of this rule shall not invalidate the remainder of the rule.

Specific Authority 120.53(1)(b), 229.053(1) 232.246(1)(a)(b) FS. Law Implemented 120.53(1)(b), 229.565(1), 229.57, 232.246, 232.247 FS. History—New 11-13-78.

6A-1.943 Modification of test instruments and procedures for exceptional students. Each school board shall implement appropriate modifications of the test instruments and test procedures established for high school graduation, pursuant to Rule 6A-1.942, FAC, for exceptional students within the limits prescribed herein.

(1) Such modifications shall include:

(a) Flexible scheduling. The student may be administered a test during several brief sessions, so long as all testing is completed by the final allowed test date specified by the Commissioner.

(b) Flexible setting. The student may be administered a test individually or in a small group setting by a proctor rather than in a classroom or auditorium setting.

(c) Recording of answers. The student may mark answers in a test booklet, type the answers by machine, or indicate the selected answers to a test proctor. The proctor may then transcribe the student's responses onto a machine-scorable answer sheet.

(d) Revised format. The student may use a large print booklet, a Braille test booklet, or a magnifying device.

(e) Auditory aids. The student may use audio devices. A tape recorded version of appropriate portions of the test may be used, along with printed copy. Appropriate portions of the test may also be read to the student by a narrator. However, no portion of a test which is specifically designed to measure reading skills may be tested through use of audio aids.

(2) The following modifications are authorized, when determined appropriate by the superintendent or his or her designee, for any student who has been properly evaluated and classified, pursuant to Rule 6A-6.331, FAC, in one (1) or more of the exceptional student categories below:

(a) Mentally retarded:
1. Flexible scheduling.
2. Flexible setting.
3. Recording of answers.

(b) Specific learning disabled:
1. Flexible scheduling.
2. Flexible setting.
3. Recording of answers.
4. Revised format.
5. Auditory aids.

(c) Visually impaired:
1. Flexible setting.
2. Recording of answers.
3. Revised format.
4. Auditory aids.
5. Flexible scheduling.

(d) Hearing impaired: None.

(e) Physically impaired:
1. Flexible scheduling.
2. Flexible setting.
3. Recording of answers.
4. Revised format.

(f) Emotionally handicapped:
1. Flexible scheduling.
2. Flexible setting.
3. Recording of answers.
4. Revised format.

(g) Speech and language impaired: None.

(h) Gifted: None.

(i) Hospitalized and homebound:
1. Flexible scheduling.
2. Flexible setting.
3. Recording of answers.
4. Auditory aids.

(3) In no case shall the modifications authorized herein be interpreted or construed as an authorization to provide a student with assistance in interpreting or solving any test item.

(4) The division of public schools shall develop the modified test instruments required herein, and provide technical assistance to school districts in the implementation of modified test instruments and the determination of appropriate modifications for individual students.

Specific Authority 120.53(1)(b), 229.053(1), 232.246(2) FS. Law Implemented 120.53(1)(b), 232.246(2) FS. History—New 9-12-78.

Access, Maintenance and Destruction of State Student Assessment Tests

6A-1.944 Access, maintenance and destruction of state student assessment tests and related materials.

(1) Access to the state student assessment tests administered pursuant to Sections 229.57, 232.245, 232.246, and 232.247, Florida Statutes, including developmental materials and work papers directly related to the tests shall be limited to the following persons:

(a) Officers and employees of the Department and persons under contract with the Department whose duties require them to have access to the tests, developmental materials and work papers directly related to the tests.

(b) At the discretion of the Commissioner and upon his or her personal determination and authorization, access may be permitted for each of the following:

1. Persons assisting the Department in developing, reviewing and validating the tests,

2. Persons assisting the Department in communicating to the public general information about the tests, and

3. Persons engaged in educational research needing the tests for legitimate research purposes.

(2) All student answer sheets and related materials shall be stored by the Department or its designee for a period of not less than two (2) years after the materials are produced or collected. At the end of two (2) years, the materials may be destroyed upon approval of the Commissioner. Test booklets may be destroyed immediately following testing in accordance with procedures established by the Commissioner.

(3) At least one (1) set of final student test results on computer tape shall be retained by the Department or its designee for a period of not less than five (5) years. At the end of the five (5) years, the tapes may be destroyed.

Specific Authority 120.53(1)(b), 229.053(1), 232.248 FS. Law Implemented 120.53(1)(b), 232.248 FS. History—New 9-13-78.

Requirements for High School Graduation

6A-1.95 Requirements for high school graduation. Each school board shall prescribe requirements for graduation from the high schools of the district consistent with the needs of the students, the purposes of the schools of the district, the requirements of Florida Statutes, and State Board Rules. Such requirements shall be included in the district pupil progression plan adopted pursuant to Section 232.245, Florida Statutes.

(1) Transfer of credits

(a) All evidence of work or credits earned at another school, community college, or university offered for acceptance shall be based on an official transcript authenticated by the proper school authority.

(b) Work or credits from state or regionally accredited schools or institutions shall be accepted at face value, subject to validation if deemed necessary.

(c) Work or credits from non-accredited schools shall be validated on the basis of criteria established in school board policies.

(d) The requirements of the school board shall not be retroactive for transfer students provided the student has met all requirements of the school district or state from which he or she is transferring.

(2) Accelerated Graduation. Each school board shall, in cooperation with applicable post-secondary institutions, provide for a program of early admission and advanced studies for qualified students. A student who meets the conditions of an early admission and advanced studies program may be excused from attendance for all or any part of his or her remaining high school program and may be graduated in less than three (3) years in grades 10-12. Such programs shall meet the following conditions:

(a) Approval of the school board.

(b) Acceptance of the student by a post-secondary institution authorized by Florida law or accredited by the southern association of colleges and schools, after satisfactory completion of the equivalent of two (2) school years of instruction, above grade (9).

(c) When the above stated conditions have been met, the student may be awarded a diploma of graduation with his or her regular class or at a time convenient to the principal, provided that:

1. The student has completed two (2) college semesters or equivalent with a normal class load and maintained at least a C average or equivalent, or

2. The student has earned sufficient college credits to fulfill graduation requirements as specified by the district school board.

3. The student's high school record contains adequate notations covering the work accomplished while in college.

4. A course in Americanism vs. Communism has been completed as prescribed by Florida Statutes.

(3) Graduation under job entry studies program. Students who meet the conditions of a job entry studies program may be graduated with less than three (3) years of attendance in grades 10-12. Such programs shall meet the following conditions:

(a) Approval of the district school board.

(b) Student successfully meets the following job entry criteria:

1. Sixteen (16) years of age or older

2. Has satisfactorily completed the equivalent of two (2) full school years of instruction in grades 10 and 11 including demonstrated job proficiency or at least one (1) credit in an identified vocational course.

3. Has signed an agreement with his or her parent or guardian, the teacher-coordinator and the employer which stipulates the following:

a. Student shall receive one (1) credit toward graduation for each 288 hours of successful work.

b. Student may substitute one (1) hour of formal instruction directly related to the job for two (2) hours of work; provided, however, substitution shall not exceed one-half the total work requirements.

c. Student may resume his or her formal education at any time the cooperative agreement is cancelled by any of the parties thereto.

(c) Students may be awarded a diploma of graduation with their regular class or at a later convenient time based on the following:

1. The student has completed the credit required for graduation through work, courses directly related to the job, regular high school courses or an approved combination of these.

2. A course in Americanism vs. Communism must be taken as prescribed by Florida Statutes.

3. The student's permanent record will clearly reflect the credits earned through work and those earned by regular high school attendance.

(4) Graduation requirements for certain exceptional students. In addition to other requirements prescribed in this rule, each school board shall, pursuant to Section 232.247, Florida Statutes, prescribe special requirements for graduation for students who have been properly classified as educable mentally retarded, trainable mentally retarded, deaf, specific learning disabled, or emotionally handicapped. Any such student completing the special requirements shall be awarded a Special Diploma for exceptional students in the form prescribed by Rule 6A-1.995(2), FAC. Each school board's graduation requirements shall include the following minimum State requirements:

(a) Educable mentally retarded.

1. Mastery of the eleventh year in school, eleventh grade, special minimum performance standards for educable mentally retarded students as prescribed by Rule 6A-1.941(3), FAC. The procedures for determining and certifying mastery of such standards shall be prescribed by rules of the school board.

2. Completion of the minimum number of course credits prescribed by the school board for educable mentally retarded students. The school board shall make provision for each student to use basic, vocational, and exceptional student courses as appropriate for meeting the minimum number of course credits.

(b) Trainable mentally retarded.

1. Mastery of the eleventh grade special minimum performance standards for trainable mentally retarded students as prescribed by Rules of the State Board. The procedures for determining and certifying mastery of such standards shall be prescribed by rules of the school board. Any students who is graduated prior to July 1, 1980, shall be exempt from this requirement.

2. Completion of the minimum number of course credits prescribed by the school board for trainable mentally retarded students. The school board shall make provision for each student to use basic, vocational, and exceptional student courses as appropriate for meeting the minimum number of course credits.

(c) Deaf.

1. Mastery of the age 17, eleventh grade, special minimum performance standards for hearing impaired students as prescribed by Rule 6A-1.941(3) or (5)(a), FAC. The procedures for determining and certifying mastery of such standards shall be by statewide assessment as prescribed by rules of the State Board. Provided, however, that any student who fails to show mastery of any standard on a statewide assessment must be provided the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of the deficient standard in the manner prescribed by the school board.

2. Completion of the minimum number of course credits prescribed by the school board for hearing impaired students. The school board shall make provision for each student to use basic, vocational, and exceptional courses as appropriate for meeting the minimum number of course credits.

(d) Specific learning disabled.

1. Mastery of eleventh grade minimum performance standards for basic skills as prescribed by Rule 6A-1.941(2), FAC. The procedures for determining and certifying mastery of such standards shall be prescribed by rules of the school board. This requirement shall not include the State Student Assessment Test, Part II.

2. Completion of the minimum number of course credits prescribed by the school board for specific learning disabled students. The school board shall make provision for each student to use basic, vocational, and exceptional student courses as appropriate for meeting the minimum number of course credits.

(e) Emotionally handicapped.

1. Mastery of the eleventh year in school, eleventh grade, special minimum performance standards for educable mentally retarded students as prescribed by Rule 6A-1.941(3), FAC. The procedures for determining and certifying mastery of such standards shall be prescribed by rules of the school board, or

2. Mastery of the eleventh grade minimum performance standards for basic skills as prescribed by Rule 6A-1.941(2), FAC. The procedures for determining and certifying mastery of such standards shall be prescribed by rules of the school board. This requirement shall not include the State Student Assessment Test, Part II.

3. Completion of the minimum number of course credits prescribed by the school board for emotionally handicapped students. The school board shall make provision for each student to use basic, vocational, and exceptional student courses as appropriate for meeting the minimum number of course credits.

(f) Nothing contained in subsection (4) of this rule shall be construed to limit or restrict the right of an exceptional student solely to a Special Diploma for exceptional students. Any such student shall, upon written request, be afforded the opportunity to fully meet all requirements of

Section 232.246, Florida Statutes, through the procedures established therein, and thereby qualify for a Standard Diploma as prescribed in Rule 6A-1.995(1), FAC, upon graduation.

(g) The parents of each exceptional student eligible for a Special Diploma for exceptional students shall be notified of the options available under Rule 6A-1.95(4)(f), FAC, prior to eleventh grade testing.

Specific Authority 229.053(1), 230.23(7)(a), 232.23, 232.246, 232.247, 233.068, 241.479 FS. Law Implemented 228.093(2), 229.814(5), 230.23(7)(a), 232.23, 232.246, 232.247, 233.064, 233.068(1), 241.479(1) FS. History—Amended 3-26-66, 4-11-70, 5-20-71, 8-19-72, 11-17-73, Repromulgated 12-5-74, Amended 6-6-78, 11-29-78, 7-2-79. c.f. — Minimum Performance Standards prescribed in Rule 6A-1.941 appear in the following Department of Education publications: (1) Minimum Student Performance Standards for Florida Schools grades 8 and 11 — Reading, Writing, and Mathematics. (2) Minimum Student Performance Standards for Florida Schools Reading, Writing, and Mathematics — Exceptional Students in the Following Programs: Educable Mentally Retarded, and Hearing Impaired.

APPENDIX C

Skills Tested on the State Student Assessment Test, Part II

APPENDIX C

Skills Tested on the State Student Assessment Test, Part II

Skill	Communication Skills - Reading
11	The student will, in a real world situation, determine the main idea inferred from a selection.
12	The student will, in a real world situation, find who, what, where, which, and how information in a selection.
16	The student will, in a real world situation, determine the inferred cause and effect of an action.
20	The student will, in a real world situation, distinguish between facts and opinions.
21	The student will, in a real world situation, identify an unstated opinion.
26	The student will, in a real world situation, identify the appropriate source to obtain extensive information on a topic.
28	The student will, in a real world situation, use an index to identify the location of information requiring the use of cross-references
29	The student will use highway and city maps.

Skill	Communication Skills - Writing
32	The student will include the necessary information when writing letters to supply or request information.
33	The student will complete a check and its stub accurately.
34	The student will accurately complete forms used to apply for a driver's license, employment, entrance to a school or training program, insurance, and credit.

Skill	Mathematics
17	The student will determine the elapsed time between two events stated in seconds, minutes, hours, days, weeks, months, or years.

Skill	Mathematics
24	The student will determine equivalent amounts of up to one hundred dollars using coins and paper currency.
30	The student will determine the solution to real world problems involving 1 or 2 distinct whole number operations.
32	The student will determine the solution to real world problems involving decimal fractions or percents and one or two distinct operations.
33	The student will determine the solution to real world problems involving comparison shopping.
34	The student will determine the solution to real world problems involving rate of interest and the estimation of the amount of simple interest.
35	The student will determine the solution to real world problems involving purchases and a rate of sales tax.
36	The student will determine the solution to real world problems involving purchases and a rate of discount given in a fraction or percent form.
37	The student will solve a problem related to length, width, or height, using metric or customary units up to kilometers and miles, conversion within the system.
38	The student will solve a problem involving the area of a rectangular region using metric or customary units.
39	The student will solve a problem involving capacity using units given in a table (milliliters, liters, teaspoons, cups, pints, quarts, gallons), conversion within the system.
40	The student will solve a problem involving weight using units given in a table (milligrams, grams, kilograms, metric tons, ounces, pounds, tons), conversion within the system.
41	The student will read and determine relationships described by line graphs, circle graphs, and tables.

APPENDIX D

Guidelines or Suggestions for Using State Assessment Tests to Improve Curricular Programs

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Guidelines or Suggestions for Using State Assessment Tests to Improve Curricular Programs

I. Identify staff members who are to be involved in interpretation of the results

_____Teachers, grades 3, 5, 8, 11 and 12.
_____Teachers of grades 2, 4, 7, 10, 12 and selected staff from other grades.
_____Guidance counselors.
_____Curriculum consultants.

II. Divide staff by appropriate subject areas and grades for examining test results

III. Set parameters for examination and interpretation

_____Give copies of Pupil Progression Plan to involved staff.
_____Determine local priorities.

_____Decide if each standard and subsumed skill is of equal importance.
_____Establish local priorities for remediation based on the Pupil Progression Plan in conjunction with student weaknesses as demonstrated by performance on grades 3, 5, 8, and 11 assessment tests.

_____Determine an agreed upon percent of students mastering skills and standards as criteria or cutoff.

IV. Analyze Listing of Achievement and Student Report for immediate remediation of individual students with specific weaknesses at grades 3, 5, 8, 11 and 12.

For Groups of Students.

_____For 11th grade, group students according to weaknesses as identified by State Student Assessment Test, Parts I and II.

_____At grades 3, 5, 8, and 11, group students with common problems as identified by their failure to achieve certain skills or items.

_____Examine Foil Analysis and Listing of Achievement in relation to the State Student Assessment Test, Part I Test Booklet left in the principal's office.

For Individual Students.

_____ Use Listing of Achievement for State Student Assessment Test, Parts I and II and the listing of students who did not pass State Student Assessment Test, Part II to identify individual students whose achievement is low.

_____ Use Student Report and Listing of Achievement report to identify content categories of skill deficiencies as listed on Student Report.

_____ Use Student Report to identify incorrect items and choices selected and examine these items by locating the SSAT-I test booklet left in the principal's office.

For Remediation Process.

_____ Develop program for 11th graders who did not pass State Student Assessment Test, Part II and missed one or more of the minimum performance standards on the State Student Assessment Test, Part I according to the District or School's Pupil Progression Plan and the Compensatory Education Program

_____ Determine if a student has not mastered the Part II test or one or more standards between the October statewide test administration and when the district or school obtains the results.

_____ Retest by paper and pencil tests.
_____ Use classroom exercises on an individual student basis.

_____ Provide remedial activities and programs for students.

V. Analyze, interpret and evaluate school and district SSAT-I results for curricular evaluation and modification. (District Item Achievement Report, District Skill Achievement Report, Listing of Achievement-School or District Summary, and Foil Analysis).

_____ List standards from highest to lowest by the percent of students mastering each standard.

_____ List skills from highest to lowest by the percent of students mastering each skill.

_____ Determine if there are hierarchical learning problems at skill level.

_____ Break skills up into three groups--possibly by categories of performance of (1) satisfactory, (2) could be improved, or (3) needs much improvement.

_____Check for patterns by:

_____Grouping by skill categories or student characteristics.
_____Comparing district and State performance.
_____Relating scores or analysis of scores to Pupil Progression Plan.

_____Examine Foil Analysis data to determine specific problem areas or patterns.

_____List most difficult items for total test.
_____List most difficult items under each skill.
_____Determine concentrations of low scores in a skill or category.
_____Investigate scores which deviate from a typical relationship or pattern from school to district to State scores.

_____Examine actual test items (copy of test may be found in principal's office) to determine specific aspect of skill which was not achieved and specific content of test item.

_____Summarize data by skills or items for each subject area for each grade on which students did or did not do well.